

# CHOSEN OF GOD

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Chosen of God

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# CHOSEN OF GOD.

But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth.

*2 Thess. 2:13.*

By Rev. HERBERT W. LATHE.

FLEMING H. REVELL COMPANY,  
CHICAGO. NEW YORK. TORONTO.  
*Publishers of Evangelical Literature.*

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## PREFACE.

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The object of this book is to lead the child of God into the richer experiences of the life in Christ. Many Christians make little progress after conversion. One reason is that they think of salvation as the strength which God gives to help them save themselves. The Christian life is to them a human undertaking attended by divine aid. In these pages the life in Christ is presented as the work of God in the soul, and the believer is encouraged to commit himself entirely to God to be kept by Him.

In Part I it is shown that the Christian is one chosen of God unto eternal life. This fact is established from the teachings of our Lord and of Paul, and from the personal experience of the chosen one, and the Biblical explanation of the fact is unfolded.

In Part II the light from this fact of the believer's adoption is thrown upon other great truths of the Gospel and itself is illuminated by them.

Part III is given to the practical results of this fact when fully accepted by the believer and the church.

Thus the central thought of the book, the one truth about which all the chapters gather, is the blessed fact that God gives life to His beloved ones, and that all they have to do is to receive it. It is the prayer of the author that any Christian who reads these words, and who is conscious of being on a low plane of Christian living, may be led to realize his true standing with God as a chosen heir of grace, and that through the gateway of that new knowledge he may pass to a holier and happier stage of religious experience.

—*Pasadena, Cal.*

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PART I.  
THE FACT REVEALED.



## CHAPTER I.

# THE TEACHING OF CHRIST.

---

Weakness is the mightiest thing on earth when it affords room for God to work. —*Horatio Bonar.*

Inward holiness and eternal glory are the crown with which God dignifies his elect. But they are not the cause of the election. A king is not made a king by the royal robe he wears and the crown which encircles his brow; but he therefore wears his robes and puts on his crown because he is king. —*Salter.*

A great word of late is “environment.” A machine is at peace when fitted to its place. This is the peace which the world gives. My real environment however is not material but spiritual. I am more truly a member of the kingdom of God than of this earthly kingdom. I have citizenship in heaven more really than I have citizenship here. I am as truly a member of Christ’s kingdom as if I had come from there deputed to live for a time on earth. Hence my true environment is environment of soul. To that I am to be fitted.

—*Benj. C. Blodgett.*

It is a wonderful instance of wisdom and goodness that God has so connected His own glory with our happiness that we cannot properly intend the one but that the other must follow as a matter of course, and our felicity is at last resolved into His eternal glory.

—*Archbishop Leighton.*

Man is a vessel destined to receive God, a vessel which must be enlarged in proportion as it is filled, and filled in proportion as it is enlarged. —*Godet.*

As our Savior’s earthly ministry drew toward its close His intercourse with His disciples be-

**Christ's  
growing in-  
timacy with  
His disciples.**

came more loving and tender. Perhaps the remaining time seemed short for strengthening the bond of personal attachment. Perhaps He was seeking to fortify His followers against the swiftly coming days of tribulation. It may be that intimate fellowship with their Master was their best preparation for preaching Him to the world. Whatever the motive He took them to His heart with unwonted freedom during the last months of His life. Commandments fell from His lips less frequently; comforting promises abounded. There was more of heart language in what He said to them. Sometimes He even seemed to lean on them for sympathy. The best wine was kept until the end. Their training culminated in the personal revelation of Christ to their hearts. Not only was He conscious of this closer intimacy, but He also drew their attention to it, declaring that He no longer called them servants but friends.

John 15:15.

One way in which our Lord gave Himself more richly to His followers was in a new and

**Increased  
Spirituality  
of Teaching.**

wonderful spirituality of teaching. No longer the simple themes of the sermon on the mount occupied His

thoughts but the spiritual mysteries of the Passover address. Contrast the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of Matthew's gospel with the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth of John's. The apostles were at last led into the holy of holies of Christian truth. The divine Teacher made known to His pupils the deep things of God. And there was a note of triumph in His voice as He declared that this truth, and still richer, should soon be clearly and fully revealed to them by the Holy Spirit.

Among these last, best truths was one which He repeated again and again. It was manifestly a salient fact in their relations to Him. He laid stress upon it as a foundation fact in their religious history. They had thought little if at all upon it, but when once it had been declared to them it sunk deeply into their memory, and their later writings show how gladly they gloried in it. It was the simple, yet startling truth that they were picked men, divinely chosen to be saved themselves, and to be heralds of salvation to mankind. True they were in a way familiar with this fact. It was hardly three years since He appeared to them, one after another, and called

John 14: 16,  
17, 26. 15:  
26. 16: 13,  
14.

Christ's  
Chosen  
ones.

them from their nets and their business to follow Him. Thus had He chosen them. But at the Last Supper He placed the fact of their election in a new setting. In the first place they had no original part in it. "Ye have not chosen me."

John 15:16.

This bare, unmodified statement must have sounded strange to men who had but just boasted that they had left all to follow Him. But they soon saw that He was not thinking of any visible transaction which had occurred on the shore of the lake or at the receipt of custom. To the divine mind nothing initially takes place in time because everything has already taken place potentially in the counsels of eternity. Our Lord had in mind a choice and a call which had come to pass long before these men were born. The Master's invitation and the disciples' response were but fulfillments of an eternal plan. Of this—His gracious purpose for them—He was thinking when He said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

The prayer which He offered in their hearing  
The fact of  
God's choice  
expressed by  
Christ in  
prayer. expressed this fact no less than six times. His followers were a gift bestowed upon Him by the Father.

“Thine they were and thou gavest them <sup>John 17:6.</sup> me.” On the ground that they had been chosen of God He petitioned for blessings upon them. Not once is their choice of Him mentioned as a reason why they should be favored. “Holy Father, keep through thine own name <sup>John 17:11.</sup> those whom thou hast given me.” The argument for a blessing on the disciple is that he has been chosen by the Father and presented to the Son. “I pray for them: I pray not for <sup>John 17:9.</sup> the world, but for them which thou hast given me; for they are thine.” Such is the divine reasoning of Christ’s prayer. He who saw the end from the beginning and remembered every purpose of God, beheld these frail, sinful men selected from eternity to fill certain places in His kingdom. Hence they were fit subjects for divine favor. How gloriously this gracious fact must have dawned upon the minds of those eleven men. How wondrously it must have grown upon their grateful faith later on when the Holy Spirit brought all things to their remembrance and led them into all truth. We recall the pleased surprise of Nathanael when he learned that before he ever saw Christ the Savior’s eye had been upon him while praying

under the fig tree. How much deeper must have been the joy of these disciples on realizing that even before their birth God had held them in His mind and heart, had laid hold of them as His own, and had presented them to His Son as a gift. In the light of this truth they soon understood all that their Master meant when he said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."

But the disciples were not altogether unprepared by education to apprehend this teaching of Christ. They were Jews, members of a chosen race.

**An old truth  
newly ap-  
plied.** No historical fact was more firmly fixed in the faith of the Hebrew nation than this, that Jehovah had selected them from all the nations to be His peculiar people. Their thought often recurred with pride to that ancient assurance of their Scriptures, "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." And this divine election had descended to individuals, had laid its hand and its mandate on Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, all the heroes and martyrs and prophets,

as special recipients of heavenly grace. John and Peter and the rest had read their Scriptures, and in those sacred books the corner stone of biography, and the "philosophy of history" is the sovereign choice by God of the children of Israel. "You only have I known of all the families of the earth," is the key which unlocks the meaning of all the Law and the Prophets. As he who would obliterate from the New Testament the expiatory sacrifice of the Son of God must first destroy type and symbol and prophecy in the ancient Scriptures, of which our Savior said, "They are they which testify of me," John 5:39. so he who would reject Christian election as revealed in the gospels must take the very pith and substance out of the inspired record of God's redemptive work in Israel. The Jews of the first century have been called narrow and bigoted because they did not readily accept the universality of the gospel. But exclusiveness was not their choice. It had been divinely commanded them from the beginning, and their national sin under the old covenant was that they did not keep themselves altogether separate from the nations.

Amos 3:2.  
Ps. 65:4.

Our Savior therefore did not use an unfamiliar

term when He spoke of His followers as "the elect." A short time before the Last Supper, in portraying the wonders of His coming kingdom, He had repeatedly applied this expression to Christian believers. "For the elect's sake" the days of Jerusalem's destruction should be shortened. False prophets would arise to deceive if possible "the very elect." The angels were to come and "gather together his elect from the four winds of heaven." A Jew could attach but one meaning to the term, and our Savior would use it only in its accepted sense. It meant those whom God had graciously selected to be recipients of His favor.

This is the Christian's heritage. He is fore-redeemed. Let him be assured of it and rejoice in it. Let him thank God that he was not left to follow the dictates of his evil nature, that his eternal welfare was not suffered to hang upon the choices of his wicked heart. His Lord says to him, "I have chosen you." The true disciple has been named to receive special favor from God. Selected and separated from the world he is peculiarly blessed. Throughout his life he is attended by the loving oversight of heaven.

Mat. 24:22,  
24, 31.

**Christ's choice of us precedes our choice of Him.**

John 15:19.

Many have been called, he has been chosen. Many have heard the invitation, he has become partaker of the heavenly grace. The Father has reached down to him even in his sin and indifference, taken him an unwilling captive, and presented him to Christ. On the wall of his study at Olney John Newton had these words displayed, "Remember that thou wast a bond-  
man in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee." In this way our Savior thinks of us, not as men and women who of our own notion have decided to follow Him, but as chosen ones, named by Him to be redeemed, sanctified, glorified. Have we been wont to think of ourselves thus, as those whom Christ has separated from the world? Our poor lives are to be taken up by Him to be made what He pleases, faultless, complete in Him, according to a purpose formed before the morning stars sang together. What is it to be a Christian? To be chosen of God. To be given by God to Christ. To be fashioned by Christ into likeness to His own perfect image.

Deut. 15:15.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE TEACHING OF PAUL.

---

Paul's words have feet and hands; they run after you, they seize you. —*Luther.*

Election is the expression of God's infinite love towards the human race, redeeming man from sin through Christ, and by the Holy Spirit bringing him into this state of redemption, so far as it is consistent with the interests of God's great and final kingdom. It is the divine love in its concrete and most triumphant form.

—*Henry B. Smith, D. D.*

Two grand truths have always seemed to me to pervade the whole Bible and not to be confined to a few particular phrases, viz. that if we are saved it is entirely of God's grace; and if we are lost it will be entirely from ourselves. I know full well a man may easily force me into a corner with things seemingly or really related to the truth of either of these affirmations; but he will not shake my confidence in either, while I can read, "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thy help." The connection is like a chain across a river; I can see the two ends but not the middle; not because there is no real union, but because it is under water. Lower the water or raise the links, and I shall see the centre as well as the extremes.

—*William Jay.*

The apostle Paul explained and defended the truths which Christ simply affirmed. He who was the truth "taught with authority"; His apostle "reasoned of righteousness." This

was an important part of Paul's mission, to be the authoritative theologian of the church. He collected and classified the precious gems of truth which the divine teacher scattered along the way. No important doctrine is set forth by Paul which was not first revealed by his Master. It did not come within the scope of Christ's purpose to present a formal system of religious truth. As Dr. Dale pithily observes, "He came not so much to preach the gospel as that there might be a gospel to be preached." When the Mohammedan moollahs told Henry Martyn that the Koran was as good a teacher of the cardinal virtues as Christ was, the missionary pertinently replied that Jesus Christ came not so much to teach as to die. Our Lord said the same thing to Nicodemus. When the Jewish rabbi began to compliment Him as a "a teacher come from God," Christ could hardly wait to hear him through before declaring to him that He came to be lifted up as the serpent was lifted up in the wilderness. Indeed He Himself was the Gospel. What He was and what He did constitute Christianity. It was important, indispensable, after His ascension that an in-

An inspired  
interpreter  
of Christ's  
teaching.

John 3:2,14

spired penman should expound the great truths which center in Him.

Such a penman is Paul. Divinely appointed to his work, and equipped for it by the Spirit, **Enthusiasm** he is equal to his task. The characteristic features of Christianity **of Paul's teaching.** **Its secret.** vividly portrays for all ages. Centrally he places the Cross. Around it he gathers essential truths,—human guilt, justification by faith, regeneration, atonement, election, union with Christ, the work of the Spirit, the second coming of Christ. Into all his teaching he puts the fire and force of his intense personality. This fact which is before us—that the Christian is chosen of God—calls forth all his enthusiasm. Modern theologians may embalm it in the wrappings of dry philosophy. Not so Paul. It is as dear to him as the doctrine of the Cross itself. It fires his soul and flames out in his epistles. It flashes at points here and there unexpectedly, in a word or a phrase, showing how fully it possesses his mind. Take the **Key note of Ephesians.** letter to the Ephesians. It is keyed to this high pitch in the opening note. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” Then how the eager words

tumble over one another through three chapters as the impetuous pastor seeks to inspire his flock with the glorious conviction which burns in his own soul that he and they are picked men, divinely set apart and ordained to the Christian life and inheritance. “According as <sup>Eph. 1:4.</sup> he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world.” What a triumphant ring in those words. “Chosen us in him”—in Christ, and therefore made us one family,—“predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus <sup>Eph.</sup> Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will.” Paul exults in these wondrous evidences of infinite grace. That God should have chosen him at all would have thrilled the apostle’s soul with amazement and gratitude. But that this gracious choice should have been made ages on ages before Paul came into being, should have been “according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord,” excited a wonder and an awe in Paul’s inmost being, which he could not express in words. <sup>Eph. 3:11.</sup>

So in Romans IX–XI his logic is on fire with this glowing thought. He argues the exceeding

**Climax of  
the Epistle  
to the  
Romans.**

riches of divine grace in the salvation of the outcast nations with the fervor and exultant joy of a father rejoicing in the rescue of his children. And so when he reaches his conclusion his state of mind is not that of a logician who has proved his proposition, but of a Christian pastor who has portrayed the redemption of his people, and in the eleventh chapter we find not the *quod erat demonstrandum* of the debater, but the triumphant pæan of the gospel herald. “O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments and his ways past finding out! For of him, and through him, and to him are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Rom. 11:33,  
36.

It is a significant, but not strange, fact that

**Why Paul  
laid stress on  
this truth.** Paul, of all inspired writers, should be the most fervid expositor of those words of Christ, “I have chosen you.”

Rom. 1:1.

1 & 2 Cor.  
1:1.

Gal. 1:1.

Eph. 1:1.

His very introduction of himself to his readers suggests that the fact was ever on his mind. “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God.” The fact describes the man. Indeed this truth of the sovereign choice by God of His servants may almost be said to have taken on a

Pauline personality, so instantly do we think of the apostle when we speak of the truth. And why should Paul, rather than another, be the foremost champion of electing grace? Because of his exceptional religious experience. A fascinating volume might be written on the relation between Paul's teachings and God's personal dealings with him. It could easily be shown that the truths which he makes prominent in his epistles are those which had been emphasized in his conversion and subsequent Christian growth. Especially would the choice of him by God appear to have grounded itself on his personal history. It was the wonder of his life that he, of all men, should have been selected of God to be saved himself, and to be a chosen vessel to bear Christ's name before Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. He was vividly conscious of the fearful obstacles which divine grace had met and overcome in his conversion. No sooner was he alone in the house of Judas than the strangeness of his call came to his soul. He pondered over it. In Arabia the wonder of it increased as he meditated. Never to the end of his life could he think of it as anything but a marvel that God

Col. 1:11.  
1 & 2 Tim.  
1:1.

laid a saving hand on him the persecutor, the blasphemer, and enlisted all his powers in the service of Christ. This wonder expresses itself in his epistles in most humble allusions to his conversion and to the honors laid upon him as a herald of Christian truth. Less than the least of all saints this grace was given to him that he should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ.

Eph. 3:8.  
Gal. 1:15, 16.

Characteristics of Paul's faith in electing grace. Three characteristics of Paul's personal experience of electing grace are worthy of notice. In the first place he gives himself wholly to it. Whatever else is true this is certainly indisputable that he is a redeemed man by the sovereign choice of God.

**1. He casts himself unreservedly upon it.** There are no limitations to be put upon this fact. It is not to be hedged about by explanations and corrections.

Paul gives the conviction full sway. The comfort and inspiration of it are not diminished by mental reservations. The apostle is persuaded that his name has been written in the Lamb's Book of Life by God's own hand. It is the everlastingness of his election which makes the certainty of it doubly sure. The thing was determined before the foundation of the world.

God had graciously spoken his name in remote eternity, and the divine purpose did not once swerve during those years of his perversity, nor falter because of his resistance. Then too the unlikeness of the choice strengthened his faith in its reality. No one would have predicted that Saul of Tarsus would become a Christian. The disciples at Damascus could hardly believe in his conversion. It seemed like God's act; to no one more than to the subject of it. The more improbable it was in itself the more surely it was a supernatural work. And its irresistableness was the crowning proof of its reality. Saul the self-confident, the immovable, had been a plaything under the mighty hand of God. He had felt himself taken up and borne into the kingdom as a cockle-shell might be swept onward upon the crest of a billow. His work? He had no original part in it. "The will of God" could alone be the efficient cause. The "mystery" took entire possession of his faith. He gave himself wholly to it.

*Acts 9:10-2.2*

But, in the second place, there was no tinge of fatalism in this belief. Fate is blind, and

**2. Paul not  
a fatalist.**

this sovereign deed was the act of an intelligent mind. The apostle's faith was healthy and free from every form of superstition. No man held more firmly than he to the proper freedom of the will. The only way in which to "reconcile" election and free will is to maintain both facts stoutly. This is the Biblical method. The Scriptures never reduce a truth to its lowest terms by fine distinctions and modifying exceptions. They give to each truth its time and place, unmolested by complementary truths which may be equally important. Everywhere Paul assumes that man has the power of free choice and is responsible to God for his decisions. He exhorts men to repentance as if all depended on their volitions. Everywhere he contemplates himself as a free moral agent, and holds himself strictly accountable for his early opposition to the gospel of Christ. Nowhere does the fact of God's sovereign election cause him embarrassment. On the contrary when most conscious of being "a chosen vessel" he glories most in his Christian freedom, the liberty wherewith Christ makes free. Every Christian heart will understand his position. There are two freedoms,

says Charles Kingsley, the false freedom to do as we please, and the true freedom to do as we ought. When the human will is merged in the divine will there is no antagonism between God's sovereignty and man's freedom. If we can sincerely pray "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," we shall not fear lest our heavenly Father may interfere with our liberty.

The third characteristic of Paul's sure and steadfast hope is that it embraces all

3. All true Christians are partakers of the same calling.

~~his fellow Christians. It might be urged that his own experience was~~ exceptional, that it is not strange that

a man arrested by a blinding light and a commanding voice from the skies should believe himself to be marked out for special mercies but that other men have not the same evidence of their calling and election. Yet Paul is as sure of the humblest disciple at Ephesus or Corinth as of himself. He gathers all the followers of Christ into one company, and speaks with equal fervor and certainty of his own inheritance and that of all the saints. "He hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." To

Eph. 1:3.

Eph. 1:4

<sup>1 Thess. 1:4.</sup> the Thessalonians he writes, "Knowing brethren beloved, your election of God." The <sup>1 Cor. 1:1, 2.</sup> Corinthians are "called to be saints" in the same sense in which he was "called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ," viz.: "through the will of God." <sup>Rom. 1:7.</sup> So, too, he speaks of "all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints." However varied their personal experiences he traces the origin of those experiences to the one source, the compelling grace of God. There is no difference. Every Christian has been set apart for redemption from all eternity. Not only they who have been manifestly snatched from evil courses, but they who have come quietly into the kingdom, are chosen of God. Not only the most gifted but the least of the saints. Conversions vary only in outward appearance. Inwardly they are all the result of the effectual calling. Whatever his virtues or vices, whatever his talents, learning, station, the child of God has from eternity been appointed to receive that grace which bringeth salvation. This fact has been revealed to him by the pen of inspiration.

## CHAPTER III.

# THIS TRUTH TO BE KNOWN THROUGH PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

---

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound,  
That saved a wretch like me!  
I once was lost, but now am found,  
Was blind, but now I see. —*John Newton.*

Of all the privileges wherewith the soul of man has ever been blessed, or ever can be blessed in this life, by far the most consoling and elevating is the sense of adoption into the family of God. No man can read the New Testament and deny that this was an ordinary characteristic of the believers then living, or that it was a main element of their strength, kindling in them a joy which made them ready to face reproach, and emulate high service.

—*William Arthur.*

All the great truths of the Bible are impressed on the convictions of the people of God. —*Charles Hodge.*

There is a state of religious experience possible to every Christian. \* \* \* It is a state in which the believer no longer needs argument to support his convictions, and is no longer open to argument against them. Certain central truths of religion are fixed in his very soul. They have been settled once for all and forever. An oak of a hundred years' growth is not rooted so immovably. They are thus settled because they have become matters of experience. They long ago passed out of the realm of theory into the realm which Whitefield called "soul life."

—*Austin Phelps.*

No Christian enters upon the full blessedness of this truth till he has known the personal experience of it which fired the heart of Paul. It might be said that no disciple of Christ really believes any doctrine of grace until it has become a part of his spiritual life. But it is especially true that he must approach this fact of his having been chosen of God along the avenue of experience. If he comes to it by the way of study and reflection merely; if he accepts it only as a teaching of the Word, labels it and lays it away among the articles of his creed, he will prize it as the mineralogist values the specimens of ore in his cabinet. The believer is first of all a redeemed soul by the gracious and unmerited choice of God. If he knows his own heart he will often be filled with a sweet surprise at the position in which he finds himself, a chosen heir of grace, selected in his unworthiness, and ordained to the high honor and privilege of walking with Christ. The more he reflects on it the less will he be able to explain it. The wonder of it will sometimes seize him while at his prayers or at his daily work. Whatever else grace may seem to be it will more and more

**How to know  
Spiritual  
truth.**

appear to him as “amazing” grace. Once he sung of the happy day that fixed his choice on Christ. As his experience deepens he will sing in his heart of the happy day that fixed Christ’s choice on him. More and more fully will he realize the meaning of the words, “we love him, because he first loved us.” He will pass beyond that earthly stage of Christian experience which dwells often and perhaps anxiously upon the love of the disciple to his Lord, and will advance into the peace and strength which come with a deep sense of Christ’s love to His own. Such was Paul’s prayer for his friends—that they might “be able to comprehend with all saint what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge.”

<sup>1</sup> John 4:19.

Eph 3:18,19.

At the very beginning of the Christian life it is important to understand God’s method of teaching us spiritual truth. A right start in the Christian life. He designs that we should come to knowledge largely through experience. That was a suggestive expression which our fathers used when they said of a convert to Christ that he had “experienced religion.” Can we find a better phrase to cover the facts? Our real creed

is not the truth which we hold but the truth which holds us through its power in our soul's life. The Samaritans said to the woman, "Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world." John 4:42. So Job once said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth thee." Job. 42:5. Here is the faith of experimental knowledge as distinguished from belief founded upon hearsay. The soul thus receives from God an understanding of divine things, and this understanding is as reliable as our knowledge of the world about us, or our consciousness of our inner selves.

This sense of being divinely chosen, we observe, is not a feeling which we originated. It

came to us. We did not try to feel it.

**Spiritual knowledge imparted to us by God.** On the contrary we may have thought at the time of our conversion that the

question of our embracing Christ was one altogether of our own choice. But we early came to the knowledge that something had been done in our hearts which we did not do. Looking back we saw that there was a will mightier than our own leading and guiding us whither it would. This was the grace of God

carrying out His plan for us. Often it seems to us that we had very little to do with it after all. But we know what has taken place. We are resting upon facts. This is not some speculation respecting religious doctrine. It is the soul taking knowledge of what has gone on within itself.

Just at this point the Bible comes in to interpret to us our inner experiences.

Without the Scriptures we might have had the experiences, but we would have had no intelligent understanding of them.

*The Scriptures explain to us our spiritual life.*

One function of the Word of God is to aid the Christian in comprehending the life which he receives from Christ—its nature, its progress, and its end. The Spirit thus reveals truth to the believer in two ways, by experience in the life, and by words in the Scriptures. These two revelations agree, and hence the Scriptures explain experience. No truth is written by inspiration merely to gratify curiosity. The fact that the Bible says so much about God's choosing us in Christ proves that this truth is not a useless dogma but a fact for us to feed upon. In the Bible, as in a mirror, man sees himself. Not only does the Word give

names to his experiences, but it unfolds their meaning, discloses their importance, and declares their value, that he may have a true view of himself as a child of God, that he may know what God is doing for him and will do. The book is not his salvation indeed. But it makes clear to his mind many things concerning his salvation which might otherwise perplex and trouble him.

On the other hand, this personal experience of **Experience** **s also a com-**  
**mentary on**  
**the meaning**  
**of the Bible.** the believer interprets to him the meaning of the Word. His mind is enlightened when he becomes a new creature in Christ Jesus. John Ber ridge, the friend of Wesley and Whitefield, declared that on his conversion it seemed to him as if the Bible which he had read all his life had been lifted off the table and a new one laid down in its place. Conversion opens blind eyes to things new and old in the Scriptures. A spiritual understanding is developed. On this account only the believer is qualified to interpret the Scriptures. It is a significant fact that no great, living work upon Christian truth has been written by any man not spiritually united with Christ. There have been mighty intellects outside the church. Why have not some of them

given us profound treatises on Christian doctrine? The Hebrew and Greek languages have been mastered by scores of imperial minds which have not owned the sway of Christ. Why have they not left a single useful commentary on the Bible? Because something more than scholarship and intellect are needed to grasp and to unfold the things of the Spirit. Truth must pass into the life, the inner life, before it can be expounded in language. This is conspicuously so with respect to the truth that God has chosen us. The believer sees this truth in the light of what God has wrought in his soul. He can no longer discuss the ninth of Romans as he reasons concerning a theory of natural science. He has felt the power of divine grace in his own sinful nature. His religious faith is like the life blood which courses through his veins. He is like the prospector who has been to the mountain and found gold. He hears with indifference all arguments against the probability of finding gold in that place. He has searched the mountain. The prize is in his possession. He only can speak as an authority. There was a time when Christ's words, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you,"

may have been a stumbling block to his understanding. Now they are not only the solace of his own hope of salvation, but afford him the sole hope that any one will be saved. For his heart tells him that if God had not first chosen him he would never have chosen God, and observation assures him that nothing less than the sovereign grace of God will move any soul to repentance, and save the world from sin. He knows from experience that holiness is not natural to the human heart. It must be implanted by the Spirit, and nurtured by divine grace. This is the meaning of James where he says that truth is to be "sown into" our nature.

*James 1:21.*

"Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls." Thus the spiritual life of the believer throws light upon the Bible. And as he becomes more fully conscious of what grace has done and is doing for himself, his understanding of the Scriptures grows in breadth and clearness.

It follows that if we are to come more fully into possession of this precious truth that we are chosen of God we must seek a closer union with Christ. Spiritual truth is spiritually dis-

cerned. If any of the revealed truths of the gospel seem to the believer to be "foolishness" there is something wrong in his relation to his Savior. Perhaps he has not made the unreserved consecration, has not left all to follow Christ. He may be living a worldly life. Christ said to those Jews who believed on Him, "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Truth of itself will not make men free. It will often harden them in slavery to sin. The heat which softens the wax hardens the clay. Nor will truth be fully made known to those who are not "disciples indeed." We must continue in Christ's word by prayer, by obedience, if we are to know the truth, and to be made free by it.

A deeper spiritual life  
our need.

John 8:31,  
32.

It follows also that the hope of the Christian should be "both sure and steadfast." *Unconscious Christianity.* We have heard it said of some persons that they were Christians without knowing it. Do we find any such mentioned in the Word of God? Do we know of persons who love their friends without knowing it? A drowning man may indeed be taken from the water uncon-

scious, and for a time not know that he is rescued. But as soon as he awakens on the shore he comprehends his deliverance and is grateful to his rescuers. If a redeemed man reads the Bible does he not speedily recognize in its descriptions of the new birth that experience which has taken place in his own soul? Does not the theory that men can be disciples of Christ unconsciously look very much like a device of Satan to lull to sleep our anxiety as to the indifference of our unsaved friends? May it not be that "the father of lies" is pleased to have us satisfied with feeble assurance of our own salvation? Surely it is not the will of God that His chosen ones should walk in ignorance of their present rich inheritance. Christ manifests Himself to His own. When the door has been opened and the heavenly guest has come in He makes Himself known to the willing disciple.

## CHAPTER IV.

# THE SCRIPTURAL EXPLANATION OF GOD'S CHOICE OF HIS PEOPLE.

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God is his own interpreter.

—*Cowper.*

A science without mystery is unknown; a religion without mystery is absurd.

—*Drummond.*

I have lately seen two wonders. First, as I looked out of the window I saw the stars in the heavens and the entire beautiful vault which God has raised; yet the heavens fell not and the vault still remains. Now some would be glad to find the pillars which sustain it, and grasp and feel them. The other was this—I saw great thick clouds hanging above us with such weight that they might be compared to a great sea; and yet I saw no ground on which they rested and no vessel wherein they were contained; yet they did not fall on us, but saluted us with harsh look, and fled away. As they pass away, a rainbow shines forth on the ground and on our roof.

—*Martin Luther.*

I believe in order that I may understand. —*Anselm.*

And they that ascribe all unto God, what good soever they have received, seek not glory one of another, but wish for that glory which is from God alone; and desire above all things that God may be praised in Himself and in all His saints; and are always tending to this very thing.

—*A. Kempis.*

What are the mysteries? They are the mountain peaks of revelation lost in the clouds. —*Remensnyder.*

Negligentia mihi videtur, si, postquam confirmati in fide, non studemus quod eredimus intelligere. —Anselm.

Isa. 45:15.

Human reason and divine wisdom never collide. Like the flight of a sparrow and that of an eagle they move on different planes. An event may be strange in the sense that the wisdom of man would not have planned it, but it is not strange that God should do anything that He does. Before we are qualified to say that, we must be as wise and as holy as He. His judgments may be unsearchable but our incapacity to comprehend should not provoke us to impatience. Our hearts may sometimes echo the words of Isaiah, "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself," but we should do so in his reverent spirit, and not Jonah-like be displeased with the mysterious ways of divine grace.

In seeking to understand any great truth of the Scriptures, like the one that has been unfolded in the preceding chapters, it is enough to show that human reason cannot prove it false. Difficulties may arise in the way of its acceptance, but greater ones beset its denial. The duty of the believer is not to prove that no objection can be

No conflict  
between  
reason and  
revelation.

An element  
of mystery  
in every  
great truth  
of revela-  
tion.

brought against his faith, but to show that, in spite of not unimportant objections, his faith is reasonable. He will sooner distrust his own powers of reasoning than question a clear statement of God's Word. He will say, "What I understand of divine truth is so good, so wise, so beautiful, that I will not question the goodness, the wisdom, the beauty of that which I do not comprehend." And he will specially hold to those truths which minister to his comfort and growth. To reject such truths because they puzzle the intellect would be like a man who should refuse bread because he did not know how it was made.

Man's intellect is as truly on probation as his heart and will. He shows his obedience by submission of reason to revealed truth as really as by submission of will to divine discipline. The thoughts of man need chastening as well as his passions. If he cannot prove affliction to be unmerciful no more can he prove mystery to be untrue. It is unbelief which condemns the world. Christ's charge against His enemies is, "Ye will not believe." In the eighth and twelfth chapters of John's gospel our Savior returns again and

*Man's mind  
on trial be-  
fore God.*

again to this rebellion of intellect against His teaching, culminating in the solemn asseveration that such rebellion will rise up at the judgment to condemn unbelievers. "The word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." Loyalty to truth is one capital test of character. "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." If faith were sight there would be no unbelievers. If doctrine were as demonstrable as mathematics no one could doubt, and there would be no merit in belief. Here is where faith comes in. The hearty allegiance of the intellect to the mysteries of redemption is palmary proof of a renewed heart. "This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith."

The Christian will accept the Bible as his **The Bible an infallible authority.** authority in matters of faith. He will prefer the declarations of God to the reasonings of man. If the Scriptures leave mysteries unexplained he will accept the mysteries and wait for the explanation. Hard sayings he may meet, but he will not deny a fact in order to escape a difficulty. In this attitude he will not be conscious of any mental bondage.

John 12:48.

Mk. 16:16.

1 John 5:4.

Reason has its rights in determining what are the claims of the Bible upon its confidence as a traveller exercises his judgment in choosing a guide through an unknown country. The trustworthiness of the guide having been proved the only rational course is to believe his word and to follow his leading. We do not accept the Bible on condition that it shall teach what seems plausible to our finite understanding. We know that "the secret things belong unto the Lord our God," and we believe that a revelation always level with our comprehension would lack one mark of inspiration. Truth makes us free—truth which we cannot comprehend. It releases us from errors into which our fallible reason falls. "Blessed are they that have not seen and yet have believed." Some things we do not care to understand.

Not Gabriel asks the reason why,  
Nor God the reason gives.

Mystery has a salutary influence upon the spirit of man. It chastens the imagination, and curbs the curiosity. The docile Christian is glad to be a receptive pupil under divine instruction. He who limits himself to the discoveries and the deliverances of the human in-

tellect is the real bondman, the “narrow” man. He moves in a limited plane of thought. He who opens his mind to the tuition of omniscience is the real freeman.

The fact of election as taught in God’s Word, does not contradict any principle of righteousness or any affirmation of reason,   
*God’s choice of His people is reasonable and righteous.* Certain inferences have been drawn, certain explanations have been ventured, for which the Bible is not responsible, and which we are not bound to accept. These are superfluities, man’s devices. God’s truth is simply this, that from eternity He has chosen the redeemed, has provided for their spiritual renewal and growth, and will finally receive them to eternal blessedness at His right hand. This truth is set forth in the Book which abounds in invitations to the sinner to choose the way of life, and in such assertions as, “Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely,” “and Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.” This makes it evident that the door of heaven is not shut against any. Nay, is it not evident that election is the only power that can open the door to any? For if God does not first choose man, man will never

Rev. 22:17.

John 6:37.

choose God. To this electing grace every Christian, burdened for souls, appeals in the petition. "Thy kingdom come, thy will be done." When man pleads with God for a work of grace in the hearts of unbelievers faith lays hold of the sovereign will. How instantly all objections to this exercise of the divine choice vanish when we are beseeching God to save our dearest friends. So clearly do we see truth when on our knees.

The inspired Word vouchsafes two explanations of the truth before us. Inspired Explanations. These explanations are sufficient for finite reason and satisfy reverent faith. They are probably all that man is capable of apprehending, and certainly all that it is best for him to know.

The first explanation is that God chooses us "according to the good pleasure of his will." Of some things we can only say that God does them because to Him it seems best to do them. We have our Savior's authority for thus explaining some mysteries. "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." The apostle Paul applies this explanation to God's choice of His people,

1. "The good pleasure of His Will." Eph. 1:5.

Mat. 11:26.

and there seems to be warrant for it, for our  
<sup>Luke 12:32.</sup> Savior says to His disciples, "Fear not little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." For reasons unknown to us, but sufficient to Himself, He names us as His, creates within us new hearts, and saves us with an everlasting salvation. This fact came to Paul, as it must come to all Christians who have any just sense of personal unworthiness, with great force. The apostle to the Gentiles had experienced the fierce power of sin. He knew how much God had forgiven him. Some men might detect in themselves a trace of self merit, but not "the chief of sinners." He  
<sup>2 Tim. 1:9.</sup> "saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began." Paul was not tempted to speculate further. If you ask the man who once set out for Damascus "breathing out threatenings and slaughter," why he was arrested on the road in his wickedness, and by the grace of God exalted to the highest spiritual blessedness, he can only murmur "the good pleasure of his will." We may fairly question whether even now Paul can give a better ex-

planation,—whether as he stands in the very presence of the divine glory, and sees face to face, and rejoices in the grace which brought him there, he is not lost “in wonder,” as well as in “love and praise.” It is the good pleasure of God’s will. How affectionately Paul always speaks of the will of God. Some men are impatient, almost resentful, if we refer anything to the irresponsible pleasure of the Almighty. They even permit themselves to speak of His will slightingly as if it were sheer volition, arbitrary and unreasoning, something bound to give account of itself to human intelligence. Not so Paul. It is “that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” We are taught to pray, “Thy will be done.” Can we sincerely offer that petition and yet refuse to accept that will as the final ground of God’s dealing with us? Are we to reject it as a sufficient explanation of God’s action the moment that action seems strange? Can we hope to “understand what the will of the Lord is” concerning us if we decline to believe in this first act of His will in our spiritual experience? Indeed, it is the most comforting assurance concerning anything that comes to us that it is God’s will concerning us.

Rom 12:2

Loving faith would not ask more. As we ponder upon this mystery of grace, that God has bestowed upon us the unmerited mercies of redemption, we are again and again forced back to Paul's thought, "the good pleasure of His will." There is a verisimilitude in the explanation which satisfies our reason and comforts our faith.

The second inspired explanation is that human redemption glorifies God. He saves us for "2. The praise of His glory." His own glory. God's glory is the final end, as it is the only worthy end

Rom. 11:36.

of all His acts. "Of him, and through him, and to him, are all things." This one great end does not exclude subordinate ends, but comprehends and secures them. Of the believer God affirms, "I have created him for my glory."

Isa. 43:7.

Nothing exists for itself, and nothing finds within itself its reason for being. "All things were created by him, and for him." Christ tells His disciples that the end of their righteousness is God's glory. "Herein is my Father glorified that ye bear much fruit." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." Christians are to live holy

Col. 1:16.  
Rev. 4:11

Mat. 5:16.

lives not chiefly for their own sake, not primarily for the sake of their fellow men, but for the sake of God, “that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.” So too all <sup>Isa. 6</sup> miracles are wrought for God’s glory. John says of the first miracle of our Lord that by it he “manifested forth His glory.” The same <sup>John 2:11.</sup> was true of all His works. And, as Luther declares, the spiritual miracles are greatest. The conversion of a soul is a mightier work than the raising of Lazarus. Our salvation is a spiritual miracle. As such it manifests forth God’s power, mercy, love. It is a spectacle to men and angels. It causes joy in heaven. By it God is exalted. “Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth: <sup>Isa. 44:23.</sup> break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.” God claims this honor to Himself. “I, even I, am he that blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins.” He shows His perfections in the forgiveness of sin. To every chosen one He says, “Even <sup>Isa. 43:25.</sup> for this same purpose have I raised thee up, <sup>Rom. 9:17.</sup>

that – might show my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth." Why did God choose us? "I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name's sake." The believer may think of his personal election as one harmonious note in the great anthem of praise which fills heaven with melody, ascribing "Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb."

Ezek. 36:22.  
Isa. 48:11.  
60: 21.

Rev. 7:10.

Eph. 1:12.

1 Pet. 2:9.

This is the Scriptural explanation of our being chosen of God, "that we should be to the praise of his glory." The happiness of the redeemed is secured but is not the highest end. Greater even than the joy of being saved is the joy of knowing that God's glory is promoted by our salvation. The apostle Peter dwells on this thought. "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." How can I ask for a more satisfying explanation of God's choice of me? My poor life is being so ordered as to conduce to the glory of God. My eternal happiness will be secured but that too will glorify my Father which is in heaven. Thus

in some sense I may share in His glory, and have some faint conception of what Christ meant when He prayed, "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was."

*John 17:5.*

## CHAPTER V.

# EVIDENCES OF BEING CHOSEN OF GOD.

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We have no right to judge of election but by sanctification. How do I know that I am one of God's elect? By steadily and perseveringly living an obedient and holy life—this is what I must do in time if I would be assured for eternity. The heaven of holiness begun here is evidence of fitness for the heaven of happiness hereafter.

—*Rowland Hill.*

He that loves may be sure that he was loved first; and he that chooses God for his delight and portion may conclude confidently that God hath chosen him to be one of those who shall enjoy Him forever.

—*Salter.*

I have not for an instant ever had the slightest doubt that I am an accepted sinner and, if I have to take leave of all else, I shall never have to part from Thee, my Savior.

—*Theodore Christlieb.*

When I cannot enjoy the faith of assurance I live by the faith of adherence.

—*Matthew Henry.*

Every person who cherishes a hope that he is chosen of God will seek the grounds of that hope. How can he know that his name is written in the Book of Life? The fact that he anxiously asks the question is one evidence. The existence of this

The longing  
for Christian  
assurance.

hope, however slight and wavering, is another. If he cannot gain the full assurance which he covets, let him not feel that his hope is vain. Some of the worthiest disciples of Christ have never been granted that triumphant confidence in their personal salvation which Paul likens to an anchor "both sure and steadfast." Edward Payson is a conspicuous example. He was peculiarly honored in winning souls to Christ, but to the day of his death was distressed with misgivings as to his acceptance with God. With many Christians assurance is not constant. It sometimes flashes brightly like a beacon light on a rocky coast and then grows dim in the darkness. Even Paul hints at the possibility of himself becoming a castaway. It is possible to give too much time and thought to this question. We are gratefully to accept such evidences as God sees fit to bestow. We are to bend our chief energies to doing God's will. In good time we shall know this doctrine. His work is begun within us—else we had no hope and no solicitude as to our salvation. There is, however, a certain warrant of the Christian's hope. He may anticipate and even claim certain evidences that he is chosen of God.

In the first place the chosen one is conscious of purposes, desires, and emotions, which he did not originate. New feelings toward Christ have arisen within him. The heart has gone out in love and longing toward God. The motive to serve and to please Christ has sprung up.

**1. The Christian has been enabled and persuaded to believe on the Son of God.**

The will has chosen a new path. Sin seems more sinful. It grieves the Christian that he grieves God. He no longer has confidence in his own merit and his own strength. Christ appears as the only Savior from the penalty and the power of sin. The old life seems more and more selfish, and the new life is increasingly attractive. Aspirations which can be breathed into the ear of God alone fill the soul.

This is spiritual life. It does not create itself any more than physical life is self-created. All our springs are in God. These sentiments and experiences come from Him. He has fulfilled His promise, "I will give them an heart to know me." It is a communicated knowledge. What man gains God must give. If I have chosen Him it is because He first chose me. My election of Him in time is evidence of His election of me in eternity. I would never have accepted

Him had not He previously accepted me in the Beloved. Whenever a sinful life is arrested, and there comes to the mind a perception of the grace of the gospel, and to the heart a desire for holiness, that life, that mind, that heart have been touched and quickened by the mighty power of God. The Christian has indeed chosen, but it was his choice only because it was first God's choice. God has "worked in him to will." Phil. 2:13. The believer has cherished new feelings, guarded them, encouraged them, but he did not bring them into existence. They came down from heaven. They at once distinguish him from the great mass of men who have no such desires. They are signs of the work of grace within him, as really as flowers are evidences of the hidden working forces of nature. If he is conscious of such religious experiences he may rest assured that God has chosen him as an heir of grace.

This quickening of the soul's life has been attended by peculiar leadings of providence which may confirm the believer's confidence in his election by God. If we could look behind the veil which hides the meaning of the commonest events of life we should doubtless discover that

**2. The Christian's steps have been providentially guided toward conversion.**

Job 14:16.

all of God's dealings with the unconverted are designed to lead them to repentance. "Thou numberest my steps; dost thou not watch over my sin?", says Job. This is the swift argument of a devout mind reasoning from the fact of God's care to the certainty of God's grace. We cannot cut the divine ministry in two and say that it numbers our steps without reference to our sin. Our path is so ordered as to lead us away from evil. Providence waits on grace. When Christ declares that God marks the fall of a sparrow He starts a train of reasoning which will not stop until it reaches Calvary. If a sparrow, much more man; if man physically, much more spiritually. Thus Paul reasons.

Rom. 8:28.

"All things work together"—that is providence—"for good to them that love God"—that is grace, the two clasping hands in a single verse. God governs the world for religious ends, and He numbers our steps with a view to our salvation from sin. Many a Christian can remember striking and special providences in connection with his conversion, how he was guided in a peculiar manner, how his movements were strangely over-ruled, how events were brought to pass as if everything were combining for his

personal redemption. God was numbering his steps and watching over his sin. Every act of providence is potentially and intentionally an act of grace. After a revival of religion many a convert is heard to testify to a chain of circumstances, over which he seemed to have no control, which bore him onward, or to some event which aroused him and turned him to Christ. Thousands of renewed souls have taken the journey to Damascus. By chance one comes to the place where he gives himself away in everlasting bonds. He is conscious of an irresistible impulse moving him to repentance. He remembers the time. He often recalls it as the moment of the new birth. "What a striking thing that is," says Dr. Storrs" in the crowded and radiant Gospel of John, full of sublimest discourses and events, when he says in speaking of his first meeting with the Master: "It was about the tenth hour." About the tenth hour? Why put so unimportant a circumstance into a Gospel so brief at best, and where sublime things have hardly room? There is nothing strange in it. John could not forget and must insert it. It was the first time he had talked with Him whose love and wisdom became there-

after his inspiration in life, and death, and the hereafter; and the very moment was vivid still before his recollection. He remembered just how high the sun was above the Western Mediterranean at the supreme point in his experience. He remembers it now. So there are moments in the experience of many when they heard from the pulpit words of power, declaring to them God's love in Christ, which will be memorable to them forever, as long as the issues of the choices which they made continue to unfold."

**Grace often takes us unawares.** God makes skilful use of the element of surprise in human experience.

By wise concealments He plans that we shall ever be coming upon unexpected things. This is true of the kingdom of heaven. It is a treasure hid in a field. Often the finder is not seeking it. The man who wrote, "Rock of Ages," Augustus Toplady, at the age of sixteen wandered into a barn in an obscure part of Ireland to hear an illiterate layman preach. The text was, "Ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ." The sermon made upon him an unexpected impression, and led to his immediate conversion.

**Eph 2:13.**

“Strange,” he wrote in his diary, “that I, who had so long been under the means of grace in England, should be brought nigh to God in an obscure part of Ireland, amidst a handful of God’s people met together in a barn, and under the ministry of one who could hardly spell his name.” Charlotte Elliott, who wrote the hymn, “Just as I am,” was asked by a friend at a social gathering if she were a Christian. She gave a sharp reply. But the message had gone to her heart, and soon she went to the friend to ask how she could find Christ. “Come just as you are.” “What! just as I am?” she exclaimed. Not long after this she wrote the hymn which is sung the world over.

It is not given to every Christian to recall so definitely the moment of his first meeting with his Savior. Nor is it necessary. But perhaps every one may be able to mark the providential hand of God in his conversion. He has therein a peculiar and precious proof that God has chosen him. Thus the acts of providence become a comforting commentary on the purposes of grace. Events have been manifestly, perhaps strikingly, ordered for the good of the chosen one, and though at the time he did

not see it, yet as he looks back upon his course he can hear God say to him, "I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known me. I girded thee, though thou hast not known me." Let him take the comfort of this assurance. He is chosen of God. To save his soul from sin, to clothe it in the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, to prepare it for companionship with God forever, is a work so glorious that divine wisdom has planned it, and divine power has executed it. And the subject of this wondrous grace has been vouchsafed a glimpse of the divine hand engaged in the work.

There is a group of evidences which gather about an active Christian life. Why should a person find prayer a comfort and a necessity? Why should he delight to study the Bible and to feed on its teachings? Why should he wish to confess Christ before men? Why should he enjoy fellowship with God's people, and take pleasure in public worship? Why should he feel burdened for the conversion of friends and neighbors? Why should he rejoice in revivals of religion? Why should he leave home and

3. The Christian's Inner spiritual life testifies to his acceptance with God.

friends and go to Africa or China to tell ignorant and brutal people of the love of Christ? "Because he is a Christian," it may be replied. True, but there is an answer back of that answer. He did not make himself a Christian. Every evidence that he has become a disciple of Christ is equal proof that he has been chosen of God, for our Lord Himself says, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him." The true answer, therefore, is that he who is conscious of these inner experiences has been divinely appointed unto salvation. "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." All these tokens of the grace that is bearing fruit within him are evidences that God has foreordained him to eternal life. If he is trying to walk worthy of his high calling he is a son of God by God's own choice. If his service seems to himself very inadequate, and his life imperfect, and his love to Christ sluggish, this holy dissatisfaction with himself is an added proof that he is an heir of grace. Let him not be disheartened. "Though faint, yet pursuing," let him press forward in the assurance that God has named his

John 6:44.  
65.

<sup>1</sup> John 5:10.

name, and imparted to him a relish for the things of Christ, and a heart for His service.

The crowning evidence is the witness of the

**Rom. 8:16.**

**4. The witness of the Spirit.** Paul says, “The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that

we are the children of God.” This

is the inward assurance which the believer has that in spite of his unworthiness Christ has chosen him and dwells in him. “Hereby know

**1 John 4:13.**

we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.” When the disci-

piple feels within himself this confidence—either with the timid trust which says, “Lord, I be-

**Mark 9:24.**

lieve, help thou mine unbelief,” or with the bold

**2 Tim. 1:12.**

faith which proclaims, “I know whom I have believed,”—there is the warrant of his hope. The

Spirit cannot testify a lie. The believer is

**Eph. 1:13,  
14.**

“sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance.”

We have then only to ask ourselves whether we have this new love which calls God, Father. Has He so made Himself known in Jesus Christ to our souls that we have become conscious of a new and intimate relationship? Then the Holy Spirit and our spirit bear concurrent testimony that we are His by adoption. For, to the

Romans Paul says, "Ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father." Rom. 8:15. It is the same cry uttered by the renewed heart and the witnessing Spirit. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son Gal. 4:6. into your hearts, crying Abba, Father." We could not say that God is our Father had not the Spirit assured us of the relationship. Our cry is the echo of his.

We must not be disheartened if we cannot altogether understand this inner witness, nor fully express it to others. *Explanations impossible.* Spiritual life, like physical life, cannot be explained. We can be conscious of it, we can point to manifestations of it, but if your friend asks, "How, after all, do you know that you are alive?" you can only reply, "I am conscious of life." This is an ultimate fact. Eye cannot see these experiences which make up life in Christ, ear cannot hear them, but they are revealed to us by the Spirit. We cannot go back of consciousness. If a man is a new creature in Christ he knows it. He may seek more complete assurance, or perhaps we should say, a more vivid sense of his sonship.

Indeed, it is one of the duties of the Christian

to make his calling and election sure, in his own faith. His devotion and his usefulness will be greatly affected by the degree in which he feels himself to be a disciple "by the will of God." The stronger his sense of having been chosen of God the more fervid will be his consecration. Satan is ever on the alert to trouble him with doubts. The Spirit cannot always gain unhindered access to his spirit. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," but is ever ready to come in at the open window.

John 3:8.

We are, therefore, to watch unto prayer, to be ever ready for special visitations, to resist and to pray against misgivings, to rejoice when our assurance is clear and firm, and in times of comparative darkness to

Mat. 28:9.

"hold him by the feet," and to wait in the patience of hope. Sometimes it is our sin which veils from us the face of God. At other times God is testing our faith. In any case we are to heed His loving admonition. "Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord and stay upon his God."

Isa. 50:10.

PART II.

CORRELATED TRUTHS.



## CHAPTER VI.

## CONVERSION.

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You can't manufacture man any more than you can manufacture gold. You can find him, and refine him; you dig him out as he is, nugget fashion, in the mountain stream; you bring him home, and you make him into current coin or household plate, but not one grain of him can you originally produce. —*Ruskin.*

There are those in whom the life of God has begun so early, so sweetly, and so gradually, that they can no more tell when they began to know the Lord Jesus Christ as their Savior than they can tell when they first saw their mother's smile. —*Monod.*

God draws, but he draws the compliant one.

—*Melancthon.*

Every day from my window I see the gulls making circuits and beating against the north wind. Now they mount high above the masts of the vessels in the stream, and then suddenly drop to the water's edge, seeking to find some eddy unobstructed by the steady blowing blast; till at length abandoning their efforts they turn and fly with the wind; and how like a gleam of light do their white wings flash down the bay faster than the eye can follow. So when we cease to resist God's divine influences and, turning toward Him, our thoughts and feelings are upborne by the breath of His Spirit, how do they make such swift heavenward flights as no words can overtake. —*Beecher.*

Because I seek Thee not, oh seek Thou me.  
Because my lips are dumb, oh hear the cry  
I do not utter, as Thou passest by,  
And from my life-long bondage set me free.

Because content I perish, far from Thee,  
Oh seize me, snatch me from my fate, and try  
My soul in Thy consuming fire. Draw nigh,  
And let me blinded Thy salvation see.

If I were pouring at Thy feet my tears,  
If I were clamoring to see Thy face,  
I would not need Thee, Lord, as now I need,  
Whose dumb dead soul knows neither hopes  
nor fears,  
Nor dreads the outer darkness of this place—  
Because I seek not, pray not, give Thou heed.

—Louise Chandler Moulton.

We may think of a father intent upon the   
Illustration of how God's choice becomes man's choice. happiness and success of a beloved son. In his own mind he has already fixed upon a plan for the life of the lad. He desires him to enter upon a certain vocation. To secure this result he brings to bear all possible influences upon his son's mind and heart. He directs his education with the cherished object in view. He speaks favorably of the proposed trade or profession. He watches the boy's aptitudes and tendencies, and strives to guide them in the desired direction. His own wish and effort is to mould the young life into that form which satisfies his own ideal. In due time the son comes of age. He must enter upon his life's work. To his father's great joy he chooses that vocation upon which the father had set his heart. In thus choosing,

the young man is conscious of no constraint upon his will. The decision is left with himself, and he freely makes his choice, and enters upon its accomplishment. And now he learns that this has been his father's will concerning him from the beginning. He discovers that parental love all along has shaped his young life to the very result which appears in his own free choice. What is his feeling? Certainly one of deepening gratitude that he was not left to his youthful impulses in choosing his path. And as he grows in years, and becomes more fully satisfied with his chosen calling, he will more deeply appreciate the love and wisdom which denied him the false freedom of unbridled inclinations, and secured to him the true liberty of worthy desires. And if asked who chose for him his way, he will reply, "My father chose it for me. I chose it myself."

Such an event which has occurred substantially thousands of times, fairly illustrates the bearing of God's choice of us upon our choice of Him. We have only to remember that God's choice is eternal, and that His resources for shaping our course are infinite. The earthly father

Regenera-  
tion and  
conversion.

might not infallibly secure his end; the heavenly Father cannot fail. Having chosen He overrules events to the accomplishment of His will. His choice becomes the sinner's choice, and that is conversion. There is God's act; there is man's act. There is free grace; there is free will. It is not necessary to try to "reconcile" these two factors. They are harmonized in the experience of every converted heart. Do not proclaim the one from the housetop and whisper the other in the closet. Each is wholly true. Each rests upon incontestable evidence. The Christian is conscious that he freely chose God at the time of his conversion. He is just as conscious that something was done in him at the time which he did not do. These two pillars rest upon one foundation and support the arch of his hope. Do we then fully comprehend that change in the soul's life which we call conversion? No more than we comprehend the soul itself. Fully explain your conversion and you never were converted. Neither can we comprehend the light of day and the sight of the eyes. But we know what it is to see. Results we apprehend. And we know that this result which we name conversion has been

secured through the action of God's will and our own.

This view of conversion is presented with great beauty and force in the Scriptures. "Thy people shall be willing in the day of thy power." Man's willingness and God's power are associated. God's act initiates man's action. The inspired writers are conscious of no contradiction. God's power secures man's willingness, and man's willingness gives opportunity to God's power. When Christ is ready and man is ready, nothing can prevent the blessed result. "Thy people offer themselves willingly in the day of thy power." Hundreds of revivals, millions of conversions, illustrate the fact. At such seasons of God's power the chosen ones are "free-will offerings." Their willingness is not a negative state of mind and heart. Spiritual inertia is not willingness. Non-resistance is not willingness, else the church at Laodicea was a willing people. Nor is it simply approval of God's purpose, for in that case Balaam and Meroz and the young man whom Jesus loved were willing. Willingness is active co-operation with God's plan. The willing man wills to do God's will. And

The Scriptural View of conversion. Ps. 110:3.

this he does because God worketh in him to will. When God's chosen ones are willing it is His free and almighty grace which makes them so. This is the "day of his power." All days are days of God's power in the sense that He is ever able and ready to save. But there are special occasions, set times to favor Zion, days of visitation, when He manifests Himself with unwonted graciousness. He makes His people "willing." Men begin to work out their own salvation when God works in them. Human wills are quickened by the divine will, not destroying man's freedom, but making him truly free. The artist at his camera prepares the plate for receiving the picture. The light might shine forever upon the unprepared plate without result. So God first makes willing those whom He designs to make holy.

This is our Savior's explanation. In that wonderful discourse upon the way of life, **Our Savior** recorded in the sixth of John, He explains the steps of conversion. first declares, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him," and then adds, "Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." This is the

progress of conversion. First the Father draws. The chosen one hears and learns and comes to Christ. The drawing consists of all those spiritual influences which grace brings to bear upon the soul. There is a tender expression of the way in which God uses this power in the thirty-first of Jeremiah, "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving kindness have I drawn thee." Here the divine drawing rests back upon everlasting love. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God"—not driven, not dragged—"they are the sons of God." "He leadeth me beside the still waters"—divine sovereignty shepherding human willingness. The result of this drawing is beautifully expressed in another Scripture, "Draw me, we will run after thee." Here is the fervid prayer for God's attracting grace, and the promise of eager pursuit. "We will run after thee"—determined and zealous seeking of God on man's part. Thus Peter, and Zaccheus, and the jailer at Philippi, and the Ethiopian eunuch were drawn, and thus they ran after God. How manifest was the drawing of grace in such lives as Augustine's and Luther's and John Newton's and Finney's and how per-

Jer. 31:3.  
Rom. 8:14.  
Ps. 23:2.  
Cant. 1:4.

sistent was their pursuit of holiness. You too, Christian, were thus drawn "with loving kindness." Are you running after God?

For two reasons the Christian, in thinking of his conversion, should regard it first of all as God's gracious choice of him. It will be salutary for him to give to this aspect of conversion the same prominence which it receives in the Bible.

One reason is that he will thus keep in mind that it was not he who sought God, but that <sup>1. Because</sup> God first sought him. We are commanded to "give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name." We may do this by ascribing to Him the praise of our salvation. So often and so earnestly does the pulpit plead with sinners that they almost come to think that repentance on their part is a favor to God. They sit back complacently in their pews, waiting and willing to be teased, regarding it as most commendable in themselves if so be they will consent to be saved. And while it is impossible for them to enter the kingdom of God in this frame of mind, some lingering traces of this self-satisfaction may be detected in their

character after conversion. They too often dwell upon the part which they took in the "great transaction." It is well for every Christian to think of himself as "a brand snatched from the burning." There was much sanctified humility, as well as Biblical philosophy, in the attitude of the Christian who remarked that his conversion was the combined work of God and himself. "God and yourself? And what was your part in the transaction?" "O, I resisted and God did the rest." How true of every disciple of Christ! In his sin and indifference, when he was not worthy of being sought, when he did not want to be saved, he was called, and pardoned, and made an heir of eternal life. Left to himself he would never have come to Christ. If he did not care enough for salvation to seek it, why should God be at the pains of seeking him out and redeeming him? Christ answered this question in the parable of the lost sheep. It was because God loved him more than he loved himself. This thought made a deep impression on the apostle John. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us." The Christian will recall the patience and the persistence of that love,

how it pursued him into all his hiding places,  
Hos. 11:8. ever seeming to say, "How shall I give thee up?" The Holy Spirit condescended to his varying moods, bearing with his procrastination, even humoring his whims and fickle fancies, all because God had loved him with an everlasting love and chosen him from the foundation of the world.

A second reason for dwelling upon God's choice of us in conversion is that we shall thus **2. Because** be established in confidence in our **thus their** choice of God. If the young man **hope will be** confirmed. ever had any misgivings as to his wisdom in choosing his profession he would at once reflect that his father had first chosen it for him. Doubts would vanish. His father was wise and experienced. On that wisdom and experience the son would rest. How much more may the timid disciple of Christ rest in the grace which chose him! Even after Peter had denied his Lord, there must have been untold reassurance in the recollection of those words, "I have chosen you." There come times in almost every Christian's experience when the foundations of his spiritual life are shaken. If he is accustomed to cherish this

thought of God's choice of him he will find peace. He will gain comfort in the assurance, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love." Then he will not depend for assurance upon the certainty and strength of his choice of God. That choice will appear to him as but the sequel of God's choice of him. "The Lord <sup>2 Tim. 2:19.</sup> knoweth them that are his." It is not undesirable that the disciple should sometimes be forced back upon this sense of dependence on a will mightier than his own. When he is weak then he is strong. And even though he knows no fear, and is never troubled by misgivings, his knowledge of God's love will be deeper and richer if he has faith in his conversion as the unsolicited, unmerited, unassisted work of God's free grace.

## CHAPTER VII. THE FATHERHOOD OF GOD AND SONSHIP OF MAN.

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Loving God is but letting God love us.

—*Horace Bushnell.*

To us God became a Father through the Son, not by right of nature, but by grace. —*Ambrose.*

The Sonship on which the New Testament dwells so constantly is based absolutely and solely on the experience of the new birth, while the doctrine of universal Sonship rests either upon a daring denial, or a daring assumption—the denial of the universal fall of man through sin, or the assumption of the universal regeneration of man through the Spirit. In either case the teaching belongs to “another gospel,” the recompense of whose teaching is not a beatitude but an anathema. Milton probably gives the true genesis of this doctrine in these words which he puts into the mouth of Satan:

And if I was, I am; relation stands;  
All men are sons of God.

—*A. J. Gordon.*

It is commonly thought that our first knowl-  
Our knowl-  
edge of the  
Father not  
primary. edge of God is our knowledge of Him as Father, that this is the easiest way of apprehending Him, and

that all men naturally and readily lay hold of this relationship. But such is not the teaching of Christ as to the divine Fatherhood. He says, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: <sup>John 14:6,</sup> no man cometh unto the Father, but by me." We are to find the Father by first finding the Son. If the fact that God created us could give us a knowledge of Him as Father our Savior would never have declared, "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." At one time Christ charged the Jews with doing the deeds of their father. Quickly came their indignant reply, "We have one Father, even God." But he answered, "If God were your Father ye would love me." Who then was their father? He told them. "Ye are of your father the devil." At another time he spoke a parable in which he said, "The good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked one." God then is not the Father of all men. In the Sermon on the Mount Christ taught His disciples. "When he was set <sup>Mat. 13:38.</sup> his disciples came unto him, and he opened his mouth and taught them." It was the disciples who were taught in that sermon to say, "Our

<sup>Mat. 11:27.</sup>

<sup>John 8:41,  
44.</sup>

<sup>Mat. 5:1, 2.</sup>

Mat. 6:9.  
Luke 11:1,  
2.

Mat. 5:48.

John 14:7,  
21,23,  
16:25.

Father.” It was “the children of the kingdom” who were exhorted to be perfect “even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” So far from speaking of God as the Father of all men indiscriminately our Savior always represented Fatherhood as a special spiritual relationship of God to His chosen ones. He says more on this subject in that last Passover address to the eleven, the most spiritual of His discourses, than in all His other recorded utterances combined. God is Father all the way through that address, and knowledge of the Father through the Son is the culmination of spiritual life. “If ye had known me ye should have known my Father also.” “He that loveth me shall be loved of my Father.” “If a man love me he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.” “The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father.” Our Lord had not before spoken to these men in this way. Instead of being the first step in religious experience this knowledge of the Fatherhood of God would seem to be almost the last.

This same fact is equally clear if we look at it

from the other side. What is sonship? The evangelist John tells us that we receive "power to become the sons of God," when we "believe on his name."

Only the  
sons of God  
know the  
Father.

John 1:12.

That power is not an original endowment of our nature, but a special bestowment to believers. They receive it from Christ. "Behold," says John in his first epistle, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." He is writing to Christians. "Therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not." Who then are sons of God? Those who know Him as Father. And who know Him as Father? Those who have received power. Paul says to the Romans, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." This is in accord with our Savior's promise to His disciples that the Holy Spirit should come to them from the Father. God's act in making them sons is called adoption. "God sent forth his Son \* \* \* to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." When thus we have been made sons we can call God, "Abba, Father." Sonship then is the relation to God of that soul which has be-

1 John 3:1.

Rom. 8:14.

Gal. 4:4,5,6.

Rom. 8:15.

lied on Jesus Christ. It belongs to those who have been separated from the world under the leading of the Spirit. To these God has promised to be a Father. "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." Redeemed souls, renewed after the image of Jesus Christ, are a family of which God is the Father. These are the chosen ones, or as Paul expresses it to the Ephesians God has "predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself," and to the Galatians, "Ye are the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ." In the epistles of John, sonship is rather the result of a begetting than of an adoption. John makes much of the new birth. The doctrine is the same as that of Paul, but illustrated by a slightly different figure.

The close connection now appears between God's choice of His people and His relation of Fatherhood to them. God chooses the believer from eternity, and in time sends the Son to find

**Election,  
Fatherhood  
and Sonship  
closely re-  
lated.**

him. Christ finds the believer and gives him power to become a son. The Spirit leads the son to the Father. Thus the chosen one is born into a family, or adopted into it. He may have previously recognized God as his Maker, the Provider of temporal gifts, the great Lawgiver, the Director of his steps. Now he knows Him as Father. He enters on a new and loving relation. Fatherhood means to him spiritual companionship, communion of friend with friend, loving trust. Sonship means to him filial affection, reverence, obedience. He no longer makes his own will and pleasure supreme. He is a son. He seeks first and last to please his Father. The world no longer rules his life. All the obligations which are implied in the relation of son to father he accepts and all its privileges he embraces. This is something distinctly new. He had no such feeling in his old life. He never so communed with God in prayer as now he does, never so delighted in His law, never so entrusted all his interests to divine wisdom and love. God now appears to him infinitely lovely in holiness. The change in his vision of God is as great as in the experience of Bartimaeus when his blind

eyes were opened and he saw for the first time the face of Jesus.

The child of God cannot fully describe this change, in his relationship to God, but he is <sup>Sonship a</sup> fully persuaded of two facts. One is <sup>reality.</sup> that a change has taken place. It is a reality. He has not simply gained new ideas about God. He has come into new personal relations with God. He is conscious of this fact. It is not the old feeling enlarged and purified. It is another feeling entirely. It is faintly illustrated by the feeling of some orphan waif picked up from the street and adopted into the home and love of some benevolent friend. Any-one can utter the sound, but when the child of God says "Father," that dear word means to him something which it never meant until Christ possessed his heart. This because he has received the spirit of adoption. He is as conscious of filial nearness as he is of his own existence.

He is equally sure that this new and personal relation is something which he himself did not bring about. Sonship is not an acquirement. <sup>Sonship a</sup> It is a gift. Every believer knows <sup>bestowment.</sup> that John speaks the truth when he

says that it is Christ who gives us power to become the sons of God. If the believer ever tried, apart from Christ, to gain this sense of God's Fatherhood and his own sonship, he knows how futile were all his efforts. Why were they futile? Because none but sons can have the feeling of sons, and no one can make himself a son. The testimony of every chosen one is that this blessing was bestowed on him from above. He did not lay hold of his inheritance by any wit or strength of his own. He was begotten into it according to God's abundant mercy. He did not earn it by works. He did not secure it by meritorious faith. He was not in himself more worthy of it than others. It was the free, unsolicited gift of God.

We find then that the Bible is very clear and definite in its teachings on this subject, and that its utterances are confirmed by Christian experience. From these two sources we see what are the chief features of the Fatherhood of God.

In the first place the Fatherhood of God is that peculiar relation which he bears to His chosen ones. These He has adopted and ushered into the family of saints.

Characteris-  
tics of the  
Fatherhood  
of God.

1. Father-  
hood a special  
relationship.

Once He loved them with the love of benevolence when they were dead in trespasses and sins. Now they are new creatures in Christ Jesus, and He loves them with the love of probation. They in turn cherish toward Him a new feeling. As good children love an earthly father not because of what he gives them, not because they get from him food and raiment and care, but because of what he is in himself, so the chosen ones of God delight in Him apart from all His gifts. It is not what He does for them on which their love mainly rests, but what He is to them. He may bestow, He may withhold,—they are content if they can have Him. God is His own best gift to His chosen ones. The little child knocked at the study door. “What do you want, my son?” said the father. “Nothing, father, only to be with you.” Such is the feeling of the child of God.

Another feature of the divine Fatherhood is that it shines most gloriously in saving grace.

**2. Father-hood exhibited in the Grace of God.** When God creates worlds we see His power. When He provides for the wants of the body we behold His loving kindness. When He declares His law “holy, just, and good,” we discern His righteous-

ness. When He saves us from sin and unto holiness, His love as a Father is manifested. It is revealed as grace. Grace is favor shown to the guilty. Mercy might forgive, but mercy does not impart holiness. It leaves man pardoned but helpless. Grace gives life. It does not help man to be holy; it makes him holy. When Christ said to Lazarus, "Come forth," omnipotence restored the lost life. It is life which grace bestows. Herein God is Father. His children owe their spiritual life to Him. "Of his own will begat he us." It was grace which adopted us into His family. Thus the true child of God can never doubt that God is dealing with him as a Father. If we know the divine Fatherhood in our soul's redemption, we shall be assured that all things are working together for our good in matters of less moment. Our business may not prosper, our health may fail, bereavement may come, our earthly lot may be hard,—and if our faith in God's Fatherhood hung on these things, we might question His goodness. But we have a surer foundation for faith. There can be no question as to the grace of God. That has been firmly established through our adoption into God's household.

Jas. 1:18.

Heb. 12: 7. But grace carries with it Fatherhood. Hence we know that He is dealing with us as with sons in all things. Herein is the advantage of thinking of God's Fatherhood in the Biblical way, as manifested in saving grace. It firmly secures us in the embrace of that Fatherhood at the very beginning of our Christian life. It establishes our assurance of God's love in matters of the highest interest, so that we instinctively reason with Paul that "He that spared not his own Son \* \* \* will with him freely give us all things." And just here we see why Paul prayed so earnestly that his converts might duly appreciate the fact that they were called, regenerated, and saved by grace. So important did this truth appear to him that he fervently besought God to enable the Ephesians to understand and to believe it, ceasing not to make mention of them in his prayers, "That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance, in the saints, And what is the exceeding

Rom 8:32. Eph.1:17-19.

greatness of his power to us-ward, who believe." It was not merely that they might believe a doctrine that Paul made this impassioned plea, but that they might realize the graciousness of their vocation, the preciousness of their hope, and the greatness of the power which was saving them. Every believer should offer on behalf of himself and the church this same petition. The granting of it means a revival of pure religion in the hearts and lives of God's people.

A third characteristic of God's Fatherhood is that it is revealed and secured to us through Jesus Christ. He "of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," chooses us for brethren, and thus gains for us entrance into the Father's house. Sonship is therefore union with Christ. "He that is joined unto the Lord is

3. Father-  
hood is made  
known  
through  
Christ.

Eph. 3:15,

1 Cor. 6:17.

one spirit." The believer should make this the central thought and aim of his religious life—union with Christ. "I in them and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one," was His last prayer. "Christ in you, the hope of glory," is the crown which the apostle holds before the aspiring eyes of all Christians. This is

John 17:23.

Colos. 1:27.

Gal. 2:20.

vital Christianity when the believer can say, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is not a shadow which we pursue, nor a dream of the night. The union of sunlight with flower, of heat with fire, of life with the body, is not more real. There is a life which is hid with Christ in God for sinful, helpless men and women; not a fancy of the mystic in his solitude, not a prize for him who has leisure and learning, but a reality for all believers amid their temptations, troubles, duties, cares. Man has a body; he is a spirit. Spiritually he may be joined with Christ and become a son of God. So vividly conscious was Martin Luther of this fact that he used the extravagant language, "By faith thou art so joined with Christ that thou canst say, 'I am Christ,' and he in turn can say, 'I am that sinner.'" But this union does not destroy personality. It is, however, vital—the life of Christ within the believer as distinguished from external influence or assistance—so that the apostle says, "He that hath the Son hath life." It is inscrutable though not unintelligible. We cannot fully comprehend it, but may know it by experience. It is increasingly revealed to every faithful disciple. "Of his

1 John 5:12.

fullness have all we received, and grace for grace." John 1:16

And now if it be asked, Why be at such pains to define God's Fatherhood, and man's Sonship ? the answer is this: partly that we may be able to give to ourselves and to others a reason

Value of clear  
conceptions  
of our filial  
relation to  
God.

for the hope that is in us, and partly that our understanding of this relationship may be a gateway through which we shall pass to a higher and holier life. Let us have a worthy and Scriptural conception of what it is to be chosen of God. If we have thought of Sonship as no more than the imitation of certain virtues which we find in Christ let us now learn what is the hope of our calling. There is a wide difference between the assurance that I am trying to live for Christ, and the knowledge that Christ is living in me. It is true that I hold Christ's hand, but the best truth is that Christ's mighty hand holds mine. My choice of Christ I may at times distrust, but Christ's choice of me sets my feet upon a rock. We cannot too often remind ourselves that we "were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." What is it

John 1:13.

to be a son in the Father's family? Not to improve the behavior, but to receive adoption. What makes us sons of God? His electing grace,—unmerited, resisted from the first, infinitely merciful and condescending. He chose us in Christ before the morning stars sang together. In Christ He makes Himself known as Father.

The sweetest sense of God's Fatherhood is <sup>The Christian life is more than it seems.</sup> inexpressible. The best part of the Christian life is that which the world does not and cannot see. The highest conception which the world has of a Christian is of one who excels in the moralities of daily life and the virtues of human character. But these things are the merest dress of the spirit. The Christian life is a hidden life. Its springs, its essence, are out of sight. It is nourished at divine sources. "He shall hide me in His pavilion." It grows more inexpressible as it deepens and strengthens, for Christ can save "to the uttermost." Fatherhood means more and more to the believer. Sonship becomes tenderer in its affection, and more intimate in its communion. But the more we know of it the less can we tell it.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## CONTINUANCE IN THE FAITH.

When one that was in anxiety of mind, often wavering between fear and hope, did once, being oppressed with grief, humbly prostrate himself in a church before the altar in prayer, and said within himself, O if I knew that I yet should persevere! he presently heard within him an answer from God, which said, what if thou didst know it, what wouldest thou do? Do now what thou wouldest then do, and thou shalt be secure. —*A. Kempis.*

It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God; but to fall out of the hands of the living God is a horror beyond expression, beyond our imagination.

—*John Donne.*

This is the Gospel; He that believeth shall be saved. Now, in order to the truth of this declaration, every believer must be saved. If, in the last day, the great enemy find one single soul not saved, whoever believed the Gopel, he would take that soul up, present that soul to the Judge, and to the immense assembly, and say, The Gospel is not true. —*Christmas Evans.*

I saw in my dream that the Interpreter took Christian by the hand, and led him into a place where was a fire burning against a wall, and one standing by it, always casting much water upon it to quench it; yet did the fire burn higher and hotter.

Then said Christian, what means this?

The Interpreter answered, this fire is the work of Grace that is wrought in the heart; he that casts water upon it to extinguish and put it out, is the devil; but in that thou seest that the fire, notwithstanding, burns higher and hotter, thou shalt also see the reason of that.

So he had him about to the backside of the wall, where he saw a man with a vessel of oil in his hand, of which he did also continually cast, but secretly, into the fire.

Then said Christian, what means this?

The Interpreter answered, this is Christ, who continually with the oil of his Grace, maintains the work already begun in the heart, by means of which, notwithstanding what the devil can do, the souls of His people prove gracious still. And in that thou sawest that the man stood behind the wall to maintain the fire, this is to teach thee that it is hard for the tempted to see how this work of Grace is maintained in the Soul. —John Bunyan

The security of believers is one of the glowing themes of the New Testament. Our Savior and

Redeemed  
ence, re-  
deemed  
forever.

His disciples alike are most positive in their assertions that no true Christian shall fail of entrance into the heavenly kingdom. Would we share in this assurance we must keep in mind what it is to be a Christian. If sonship is merely the result of the determination of the human will to obey Christ, the disciple may at any time forsake his Master. If the new life is only a performance on man's part, a human aspiration, a feeble effort, a struggle, a possible victory at last by the energy of finite endeavor, the safety of believers is precarious. But because a Christian life is an undertaking of God it cannot fail. Even were there no Scriptural pledges to the chosen one of his ultimate salvation, we should

infer it from the nature of his standing before God. He is, "God's husbandry," he is "God's <sup>1 Cor. 3:9.</sup> building." Hence Paul is "confident of this <sup>Phil. 1:6.</sup> very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ." Unfinished work characterizes human endeavor, but the divine Architect completes every plan which He designs. If Christ lives in me I am eternally safe, for the risen Redeemer within my soul can never die. And thus I may "know him and the power of his resurrection." I may be absolutely sure that He will keep me to the end. <sup>Phil. 3:10.</sup>

But the Word insists with singular emphasis upon the certainty of the believer's salvation. In his sacramental prayer our Lord says, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." He will give eternal life to every one without exception. Christ does not recall His gifts. "Eternal life," from its very nature is indestructible. The believer did not create it and he cannot destroy it. Speaking of His sheep, our Savior declares, "And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, <sup>John 10:28.</sup>

Christ promises a sure  
Salvation  
to every  
disciple.

John 17:2.

neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." If we had only this one verse we should be sure of the salvation of every Christian. First, there is the definition of the Christian as one who has received of Christ eternal life, and then the corollary that no such recipient shall fall away. This same fact our Savior taught negatively. In the Sermon on the Mount, He said, "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity." Here are persons who gave outward signs of being followers of Christ. By their fellowmen they could not be distinguished from true Christians. And Jesus will not tell them that he had once known them, and afterward rejected them—that they had been Christians for a time and had then fallen away—that they had been born again and afterward had apostatized—but that He had never known them at all. In the early church there were such false professors, and there have been such in the church ever since. John met them, and said of them, "They went

out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." Christ knew them in Sardis, and said that they "had a name to live and were dead."

<sup>1</sup> John 2:19.

Paul was familiar with them, and wrote that they had "a form of godliness, but denied the power thereof." Was not Judas a type of all such, a "son of perdition" among the sons of God. Did not our Lord picture them in the parable of the tares? Tares were always tares. They did not begin as wheat and afterward turn into weeds. And the wheat never becomes tares. While then "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel," and while many walk with us who are "enemies of the cross of Christ," it is true that "the Lord knoweth them that are his," and he who once enters the Father's house by adoption abideth there a son forever.

<sup>Rev. 3:1.</sup>

<sup>2 Tim. 3:5.</sup>

<sup>Rom. 9:6.</sup>

<sup>Phil. 3:18.</sup>

<sup>2 Tim. 2:19</sup>

One of the wonderful chapters of the Bible is the eighth of Romans. It is the gem of the writings of Paul. It would give us the essential gospel of Christ if all the rest of the New Testament were lost.

**The whole  
Gospel in one  
chapter.**

The whole chapter is one sustained paean of vic-

tory. It “begins with no condemnation, and ends with no separation.” And what is the note of triumph? Even this—the absolute certainty that all who are chosen of God will be saved. There are five links in Paul’s chain of argument. First, no condemnation. The believer is no longer in the power of the law and hence can never be condemned. Secondly, a new life, divinely imparted and preserved, hence indestructible. Thirdly, sonship, membership in a family chosen and sustained by God. Fourthly, an eternal purpose. The believer is predestinated, called, justified, glorified, and, therefore, held in the grasp of omnipotence. Fifthly, the love of God, great and unchanging, from which nothing can separate the chosen one. Step by step our faith is led from point to point in this inspired passage, and it must be a cold heart which does not share the apostle’s exultation as it bursts out in a shout of victory at the end. He is on the summit of the mount of confidence whence he looks down triumphantly upon tribulation, and distress, and persecution, and famine, and nakedness, and peril, and sword—in all of which things we are “more than conquerors through him that loved us”—and up-

ward to the infinite love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord from which naught can separate us. What a climax. What a chapter. What a salvation. God's chosen ones are secure. Not because of what man is, not because of what man can do. It is all of God—the pardon, the calling, the life, the sonship, the purpose, the love. Those who are in Christ Jesus are as secure as God can make them. He has hedged them about with His power, wisdom, love. He holds them in everlasting arms. They are kept—“kept by the power of God through faith unto <sup>1 Pet. 1:5.</sup> salvation.”

It is interesting to observe how differently Paul presents this same truth to some of the other churches. He tells the Ephesians, for example, that they are sure of eternal life because they have already received an installment of it. After they believed on Christ they “were sealed with that <sup>Eph.1:13,14</sup> holy Spirit of promise.” Here sonship is represented as the stamp of the Holy Spirit's likeness upon the soul of the believer. The Spirit impresses upon the chosen one, as with a seal, his own divine image. But this likeness, of which the believer is conscious, is “the <sup>The earnest of our in- heritance.</sup>

earnest, both sample and pledge, of his final salvation." The earnest is a preliminary payment in token of serious purpose to fulfil any engagement. In law it is something given by the buyer to the seller to bind the bargain. It is a handful of earth by which the purchaser takes possession of his estate, a sample of the whole, and a pledge of what is to come. So God's likeness in the Christian, the seal of the Spirit, tells us what our inheritance is to be in kind, and is a sure guarantee that the whole inheritance shall be ours. Our certainty rests upon no merit in ourselves, upon no determination and persistency of our own, but upon this, that God has set upon us a seal which is an absolute pledge that we shall be saved.

Continuance in the faith does not of course mean that the believer will always be able to

**Christian**  
**devotion not**  
**uniformly**  
**intense.** maintain the same even level of obedience and of inward joy. There will be fluctuations of feeling and variations of practice. This cannot be

altogether avoided. Spiritual life has its moods. Sometimes the Christian's service will be faulty. He will yield to temptation. Yet

Ps. 37:24, 28. "though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast

down." Sometimes his love will be chilled and he will, like Peter, follow his Master afar off. But God "forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved forever." The course of a ship is zigzag, but the general direction is toward port. The mountain path winds hither and thither, but reaches the top at last. That is a most beautiful picture of the patience of Christ drawn by Isaiah where he says, "He shall not fail nor be discouraged." It almost seems that God was discouraged with men at one time. "It repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." But Christ is never discouraged. And why not? Because he knows that no man shall pluck his chosen ones out of His hand. They may deny Him thrice but love will still hold them, and in the end they shall be saved.

Let every child of God then stand thus in full assurance of his security in Christ.

It is only when he departs from the Biblical view of sonship that he can question the certainty of his continuance to the end. Let him beware of thinking of his new birth as no more than his individual choice to follow Christ. That would make him

*It is the  
Christian's  
privilege to  
be sure of  
final success.*

*Isa. 42:4.*

*Gen. 6:6.*

a Christian “by the will of the flesh,” and his continuance in the new life would be no more certain than the endurance of his poor finite strength. But if, as Christ teaches, Christians are those selected by the divine will, then their continuance has all the immutability of God Himself. If we laid hold of Christ only our grasp may be relaxed. But if the love of God in Christ laid hold of us nothing can separate us from that love. There is a deal of inspiration in this comfortable old doctrine of the perseverance of the saints. The perseverance however is not in the saints. “Old Adam is too strong for young Melanethon.” The grace of God perseveres. “If heaven above can be

Jer. 31:37.

measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.” The young Christian sometimes asks, Shall **I** hold out? We may reply, “He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.” Hold out? Of course you will not hold out. It is divine grace that holds out. In eternity God determined to glorify Himself in your salvation. He has bestowed upon you sonship, and “the

Phil. 1:6.

gifts and calling of God are without repen-  
tance." Trust everything with Him. Make the  
complete committal, and then say with Paul,  
"I know whom I have believed, and am per-  
suaded that he is able to keep that which I have <sup>Rom. 11:29.</sup>  
committed unto him against that day." We  
love God, but our best reliance is that He loves  
us. Even the Inspired Word almost seems to  
correct itself on this point where it says, "But  
now, after that ye have known God," and im-  
mediately adds, "or rather are known of God." <sup>2 Tim. 1:12.</sup>  
Not our knowledge of God but God's knowledge  
of us is our soul's hope. <sup>Gal. 4:9.</sup>

## CHAPTER IX.

# THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD

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The year's at the spring  
And day's at the morn;  
Morning's at seven;  
The hill-side's dew-pearled;  
The lark's on the wing;  
The snail's on the thorn:  
God's in his heaven—  
All's right with the world.

—*Robert Browning.*

I am trying to bring the God which is in me into harmony with the God which is in the universe.

—*Dying words of Plotinus.*

Since I came to this town (Northampton) I have often had sweet complacency in God, in views of his glorious perfections, and the excellency of Jesus Christ. God has appeared to me a glorious and loving being, chiefly on account of His holiness. The holiness of God has always appeared to me the most lovely of all his attributes. The doctrine of God's absolute sovereignty and free grace, in showing mercy to whom he would show mercy, and man's absolute dependence on the operations of God's Holy Spirit, have very often appeared to me as sweet and glorious doctrines. These doctrines have been much my delight. God's sovereignty has ever appeared to me as great part of His glory. It has often been sweet to me to go to God, and adore him as a sovereign God, and ask sovereign mercy of him. That sovereignty of God that Christ rejoiced in seemed to me to be worthy to be rejoiced in; and that rejoicing of Christ seemed to me to show the excellency of Christ, and the spirit he was of.

—*Diary of Jonathan Edwards.*

The infinite holiness and the infinite wisdom of God glorify his sovereignty. He does what He will with His own; but what He wills to do is always the absolute best, the eternally right.

—R. Tuck.

He chooses us, not because we believe, but in order that we may believe.

—Augustine.

I worship thee, sweet Will of God  
And all thy ways adore,  
And every day I live, I seem  
To love thee more and more.

I know not what it is to doubt,  
My heart is ever gay;  
I run no risk for, come what will,  
Thou always hast Thy way.

Ill that He blesses is our good,  
And unblest good is ill;  
And all is right that seems most wrong,  
If it be His sweet Will!

—F. W. Faber.

Whatever may be the passing fashion in the religious thought of any age, it is certain that the Bible, from beginning to end, magnifies the sovereignty of God. It is the ruling idea in the story of creation, wherein matter and force appear as servitors of the divine behest. It gives man his law of life in Eden and punishes the guilt of his first sin. It is offended by the gross iniquity of a new world and drowns a race of sinners, giving answer to none. With Abraham and his seed God is first of all a King, speaking with authority, demanding implicit obedience, thundering

The Biblical  
Idea of  
God.

His will in law and commandment, visiting upon transgression the penalties of justice, and if at times remonstrating and pleading, yet always speaking as the High and Holy One whose right over all His subjects is absolute. Divine Sovereignty is the pillar of cloud and of fire through all the wanderings of Israel, their hope in trouble, their reward in obedience, their terror in sin, from the captivity in Egypt to that in Babylon. Divine Sovereignty is the final answer of God to the long wail of the book of Job. Divine Sovereignty is the majestic theme of a hundred Psalms, and the burden of all the prophecies. In all the teachings of Christ,—in tender appeal, in scathing rebuke, in instructive address, in parable and miracle and prayer, there is ever present, either conspicuously or in the background, the supreme fact that God is Ruler over all.

The letters of the apostles to the churches present the same high theme. In these the Sovereignty of God is interwoven with all His dealings with man, with providence and with grace, with penalty and with reward, with affliction and with prosperity, with the sinner's calling, with conversion and justification and

growth in grace, with perseverance in holiness and with final entrance into glory. And as we close the inspired Book with the apocalypse of the seer at Patmos, the vision culminates in the midst of heaven where stands a throne, the throne of One to whom every knee bows and every tongue confesses. God reigns. Everywhere in the Scriptures He is crowned. None can stay His hand, or say, What doest Thou? He shares His government with none, and gives to none an account of His doings.

So exalted is His Sovereignty that it imparts something of its character to every other attribute of His nature. His wisdom is All of God's attributes, His power is absolute and partake of His Sovereignty. accountable to none, His mercy is the stoop of a monarch, His love dispenses blessing with royal profusion and gracious condescension. Sovereignty is the mark of His goings forth. It is disclosed at every step in the march of events from the creation of light to the final glory. God always holds the sceptre. The Biblical name for that economy into which He will gather all things to His praise is "a Kingdom." A kingdom implies a king. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

**The devout  
believer re-  
joices in  
God's Sov-  
eignty.** This is the teaching of Inspiration. Is it necessary to add that the inspired penmen exult in this conception of God? It seems to them right that God should reign. His dominion appears to them to be righteous and good. Not only do they never resent it; they congratulate themselves because of it. The holiest minds of the ages, the minds which were chosen of God to receive His message, and were filled with the Spirit in communicating the same, dwell with awe and with rapt delight upon the sublime thought of a sovereign God. In the light of their example we may well ask whether impatience with the Sovereignty of God is the mark of a sanctified mind renewed by grace and led of the Spirit?

Whatever exalts God in the thought of His people strengthens their spiritual life. To one who said to Tennyson, "My dearest object in life, when at my best, is to leave the world, by however little, better than I found it," he answered, "My greatest wish is to have a clearer vision of God." Reverence and the sense of dependence may be cultivated with great profit. God is our

**As the hart  
panteth after  
the water  
brooks.**

Sovereign. All our springs are in Him. If He has chosen us unto salvation we know Him as King of our life. Our thoughts dwell upon the infinite love and condescension of electing grace, and we have sweet and sublime conceptions of the divine nature. We long to see the King in His beauty. The prayer of Moses is the prayer of every devout heart, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." And our prayer is answered when He causes His goodness in our redemption to pass before us.

In the lives of His chosen ones God's Sovereignty is conspicuous. He names those who are ordained to eternal life. This is an act of "that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

The Sovereignty of God manifest in the origin of redemption.

Acts 13:48.

Rom. 12:2.

It is a sovereign choice. "He hath mercy on whom He will have mercy." He asks no man's permission, and defends His acts to none. To His chosen ones He "grants repentance unto life." It is a wise choice. In view of reasons and motives which man cannot fathom God makes up the number of His elect. It is a gracious choice. In face of all the resistance, rebellion, and guilt of His chosen ones He writes their names in His Book of Life. It is an irre-

Acts 11:18.

Isa. 14:24. vocable choice. Before the foundation of the world He ordains our salvation, and swears, saying, "As I have thought, so shall it come to pass; and as I have purposed, so shall it stand."

The divine Sovereignty next appears in the calling of the chosen ones. This is the first step in the accomplishment of His choice. He draws the elect into the fold. Their will is not driven, but there is certainty of adoption in every case. Certainty is not necessity, but God never fails. As Sovereign He can surround His chosen ones with influences, and present motives which, through the power of the Spirit, will secure the ordained result. He works within us to will and to do of His good pleasure. This is our confidence when we pray for the conversion of friends, that He can overcome the strongest resistance. There is a mighty, resistless, and loving constraint in sovereign grace which moves in line with the moral freedom of man, and at the same time infallibly brings man a willing captive into the kingdom of God. The Lord knoweth them that are His, and saves them every one.

And compel  
them to  
come in.

And then sovereignty appears in the growing

life of God's chosen ones. Their progress in divine things is all of grace. God takes their lives into his keeping. Their faith, their knowledge of truth, their success in service, their victory

Progress in  
the Christian  
life depend-  
ent upon the  
sovereignty  
of God.

over temptation, their peace of mind, their power to win souls, their prevalence in prayer, their Christian assurance, all the elements that go to make up the life that is hid with Christ in God, are His bestowment. If Christians are ever despondent, it is because they have lost their hold upon sovereign grace. They perhaps think of it as a sort of friendly ally, coming in to reinforce human strength when that is not equal to its task. Let such disciples throw themselves, their sin, their salvation, their work, wholly upon God. No Christian can make himself spiritually great. He can inflate himself, but all true magnifying must come from God. "And the Lord said unto Joshua, This day will I begin to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel." Christian living is letting Christ live in the soul, surrendering itself utterly to God.

We have gone far enough to see that God as sovereign is personally present in His world. Sovereignty is not an impersonal law, nor a

Josh. 3:7.

**Sovereignty  
not exercised  
from with-  
out.** self-acting force controlling events. God is not an absentee landlord, ruling from a distance tenants in whose welfare He has no interest. He is

here among His people, not far from every one of them. It has been said that the Old Testament makes God a partaker in the life of man, while the New Testament makes man a partaker in the life of God. The truth is that both covenants bring God down to man, and lift man up to God. If under the former dispensation Jehovah took an active and personal part in the domestic and political affairs of ancient Israel, so under the new dispensation He came to earth as Immanuel, God with us, the Word made flesh. On the other hand, if Peter and Paul and John shared in the life of their risen Lord, so also Abraham, Moses, and David enjoyed the indwelling of God within their souls. Adoption into God's family is essentially one thing all through the Bible. God becomes a partaker in man's life that He may make man a partaker in His life. The more sovereign He is the more completely does He reign in human hearts. This is the scriptural teaching. The Bible exalts God as King,—a sovereign upon His

throne in heaven and in the hearts and lives of His chosen ones. His sovereignty is not a dominion exercised from the outside, but the direct authority and power of His personal presence.

It is also manifest that the sovereignty of God appears most glorious in spiritual things. True, He created matter and called forth light and gave laws to the material universe. But a single soul born anew, and made meet for its heavenly inheritance, is a sublimer trophy of His power. Majestic as is His march through the first chapter of Genesis, His ongoingings are more wonderful in the opening chapters of John's Gospel. These are the twin chapters of the Bible. In the one, God appears as sovereign in the realm of matter; in the other as sovereign in the realm of spirit. Both go back to the beginning, and both bring order out of chaos. Moses tells us how animal life was created; John shows us how spiritual life begins. And the spiritual sovereignty is by far the grander. God rules the spirit of man. He knows its laws, for He imposed them. "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the

His eternal  
power and  
godhead  
manifested  
most won-  
drously in  
the spiritual  
realm.

Prov. 21:1.

rivers of water ; he turneth it withersover he will." The day of Pentecost witnessed a more marvellous display of the sovereign power of God, than the day when sun and moon stood still upon Gibeon. It was a little thing for Christ to say, Take up thy bed and walk, as compared with his saying, Thy sins be forgiven thee. It ought not to be difficult for the Christian to accept the miracles of the Bible, for in his own soul he has felt more wonderful effects of God's might than any that he reads of in the list of physical marvels wrought by Christ. The wonder is not that God can create a world, but that He can save a soul, that He can allure it from sin to His service, that He can impart to it a new divine life, that He can purify it and add to it grace on grace, and at last present it faultless before the presence of His glory. This is the wonder of divine sovereignty. Do not think of God chiefly as Ruler of a material universe. Do not fancy that He exhibits His highest power in the exercise of physical force. That is pastime " He taketh up the isles as a very little thing." His real sovereignty is in the hearts and lives of His chosen ones.

God's spiritual reign the comfort of His people.

It is equally evident that God's sovereignty is one of love. It is the rule of a Father. Some one has said that a monarchy is the best possible form of government when the monarch is worthy to rule, and the worst possible when he is unworthy. No happier condition for the human race could be conceived than to be under the absolute dominion of such a God as the Bible reveals. His wisdom tells Him what is the best plan for the created universe, His love prompts Him to undertake it, and His power enables Him to carry it out. The stronger our faith in such sovereignty, the surer our hope, the sweeter our peace. The more earnestly, under such conditions, we can pray, "Thy will be done," the sooner will Christ's kingdom come on earth. Every sinner chosen of God unto salvation is a witness that God's throne is founded on love. And hence it always works for beneficent ends. Why be jealous of too much sovereignty in God as if it were an iron rule which could not be trusted out of sight? Imagine a merchant engaged in some business which he ardently hopes to bring to a successful issue. Suppose that he receives promise of

aid from an unseen but powerful friend. This friend, we will say, is able to remove all obstacles from the merchant's path, to give him prompt and infallible counsel as to his course, and to crown his plans with unerring success. Would not the merchant rejoice in such guidance? Would he not say, Let the power of this unknown ally be as great as possible? But this is only a faint illustration of the happy lot of every child of God. The power which works for him, and in him, ever works for his good. Each moment God is doing the best possible for him, far better than he could do for himself.

If we think of ourselves as chosen of God we are thus led up to exalted views of His nature. Righteous men find satisfaction in meditating upon the grandeur of God's government. Read the Psalms, the Prophets, the book of Revelation. How have these men stood before the very throne, and seen their heavenly King high and lifted up. Faith in Christian adoption magnifies God in the thought of His people. It makes Him seem glorious. It enthrones Him in the love and reverence of His chosen ones. It cor-

**Benefits of meditation on God's greatness.**

rects an undue familiarity with Him which sometimes weakens the piety of good men. It deepens the sense of dependence upon the divine arm. It exhilarates and steadies the spiritual life. No man can stand at Chamounix, and gaze at Mont Blanc, and not be lifted out of his little world. Let us make God great to our spiritual vision. We need the Isaiah spirit. Let the greatness, and the grandeur, and the majesty of God often pass before the mind. Cultivate the grace of adoration. The kingly attributes of God shine in both Law and Gospel. He commands us imperatively, and He saves us in sovereign fashion. By the grace of God we are what we are. Be not afraid of making too much of the sovereignty of God. The Bible makes much of it and we are safe in ascribing to God all the power and might and dominion which are given Him in the Word. Conceive of Him in all the Scriptural loveliness and condescension of His Royal nature. Pray for new visions of the King in His beauty. They enrich the heart. They ennable the life. "For he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful." Rev. 17:14.

## CHAPTER X. THE MERITS OF CHRIST.

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The sufferings of Christ would have been necessary had there been only one to be saved, and would have been found sufficient had the whole human race been to rank among the redeemed, just as the arrangement which exists for the outward illumination of our globe would have been required had there been but one inhabitant to reap the benefit presently enjoyed, and would have been sufficient had there been many more millions in existence than actually inhabit the earth. —*Symington.*

If you would know the Cross you must first die upon it. No man is in the church who has not been crucified.

—*Joseph Parker.*

Upon that place stood a Cross, and a little below in the bottom a Sepulchre. So I saw in my dream that just as Christian came up with the Cross, his burden loosed from off his shoulders, and fell from off his back, and began to tumble, and so continued to do, till it came to the mouth of the Sepulchre, where it fell in and I saw it no more. Then was Christian glad and lightsome, and said with a merry heart, He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death. Then he stood still awhile to look and to wonder; for it was very surprising to him that the sight of the Cross should thus ease him of his burden.

—*John Bunyan.*

Many things which Christianity contains I find in Hindooism; but there is one thing which Christianity has and Hindooism has not, and that is a Savior.

—*A Converted Hindoo.*

First I was shown that "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin," and then it was made plain to me that he who had thus cleansed had power to keep me clean; so I just utterly yielded myself to him, and utterly trusted him to keep me.

—Frances Ridley Havergal.

He prays for those whose cruelties he endures, remembering that he is not dying by them but for them.

—Augustine.

I saw a vessel which the waves did spare,  
Lie sadly stranded on a sandy beach,  
Beyond the tide's kind reach:  
Within its murmur of lamenting speech  
Long lay she there;  
Until at length  
A mighty sea arose in all its strength,  
And launched her lovingly.  
And thus, alas, our race  
Lay stranded on the beach of human sin  
And misery,  
Beyond all help, until God's gracious grace,  
A mighty tide,  
All crimson dyed,  
Swept grandly in,  
And set us free.

—Anon.

The gospel in one respect is like a fleece of wool. Take it up at any point and all the rest clings to it. Tear away any part and the other portions come with it. Christian truth coheres. Its parts are intrinsically related. They are members one of another. There is a beautiful sympathy among them, as of a household. While for purposes of study they are often arranged in what is supposed to be logical order, we may

Coherence  
of the doc-  
trines of  
grace.

begin with any one of the leading truths of the Gospel with the certainty of soon coming upon all the rest. All doctrines lead to the Cross. Begin our search for truth in the Bible where we will, we speedily come to Calvary where all truth centers.

A striking illustration of this appears in the use which Christ himself made of the **Christ ex-  
plains the  
cross.** Scriptures. We refer to the special pains he took, not during his active ministry, but after his resurrection, to unfold the Word to His disciples. On the way to Emmaus, "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself." The same evening at Jerusalem, in a larger audience, he "opened their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures." The time is significant. They could not understand the "all things" which "must be fulfilled," which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me," until after the crucifixion. And why not? Because His sacrificial death was the fulfilment and the explanation of type and prophecy. They never understood His prophetic allusions to His com-

Luke 24:27,  
44, 45.

ing death while that death was unaccomplished. But so soon as the Lamb had been sacrificed, and the Lord had laid on Him the iniquity of us all, Jesus could show them how all the Scriptures centered in this event. And so those last days of our Lord on earth were spent by Him in preparing His disciples for their work of witnessing, in revealing to them the meaning and the glory of the Cross.

And another fact is equally significant. The disciples never thereafter expressed the slightest regret at the death of their Lord. It is natural to mourn the loss of dear friends. No friend was dearer to the apostles than Christ. Yet they always gloried in His death. If at first they lamented, yet after He had expounded to them in all the scriptures the things concerning Himself, they never once bewailed the shame and the agony of the Cross. Not once did they suggest that mankind had suffered a great loss when the Light of the World was apparently extinguished on Calvary. On the contrary, they proclaimed that the death of their best friend was the dawning of hope for the world. “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our

Christ's chosen ones do not mourn His death.

Gal. 6:14.

**Isa. 53:5** Lord Jesus Christ." How shall we explain it? "By his stripes we are healed." The shedding of blood prevailed for the remission of sins. This fact the disciples learned from His own lips after he had risen from the grave. Their Scriptures were full of it. It met the needs of their hearts. They heralded it as the substance of the Gospel to all who would listen to their words.

Christ Himself then is the Truth, and we are not like the stupid soldiers before the Cross, of whom it is said that "sitting down they watched Him there," but like the disciples whose understanding was opened. Taking our position with them, and hearing His voice, we may come to understand how it was that God chose us unto salvation and eternal life.

Our first discovery is that God's choice of us rests upon Christ and His merits. We are

**Christians are chosen in Christ.** "chosen in him." Our entrance into the Father's family is secured by our

**Eph. 1:4-6.** Elder Brother. In the fourth, fifth, and sixth verses of the first chapter of Ephesians Paul dwells on the fact. First he says that "God hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world." Repeating the thought for

emphasis in the next verse he declares that the Father has “predestinated us into the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself.” And as if still reluctant to pass by a fact so gracious he adds in the sixth verse that “he hath made us accepted in the beloved.” If we reflect on the force of these phrases we begin to understand how God could choose us. He looked upon us in Jesus Christ. Not in our worthiness was there any ground for God’s choice to rest upon. But Christ took our part. As a prince might make the cause of a revolted province his own, and identify himself with rebels to save them, so Christ became one of us for our redemption. And as the king might behold his rebellious subjects in the person of his son, so God beheld and accepted us in the Beloved. We owe it all to Christ. It is naught to our credit that we were chosen. The best and the worst are alike unworthy. In Jesus Christ they stand equal before God. They are accepted in Christ because he is infinitely worthy.

And how does Christ open the way for God to choose us?

First, by providing for our sin. As chosen

Eph. 1:7.

**1. His blood** ones we must have pardon at the **cleanseth** from all sin. start. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." It seems impossible for Paul to make any tender allusion to Christ without being immediately reminded of the Cross. After saying in one verse that we are accepted in the Beloved, he declares in the next that the ground of that acceptance is the sacrificial death of Christ. God's choice of us could not be consummated so long as we were under the condemnation of the law. Christ came and satisfied the law's demands. He was made sin for us. "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Therefore we are no longer under condemnation, because, being in Christ, we are no longer under law. We are worthy of condemnation, but we have been bought with a price.

1 Cor. 6:20.

We are as guilty as ever, but the chastisement of our peace is upon him. Observe that this is not a human theory of the death of Christ, but

**The Bible** the inspired explanation of it. **The explains the Cross.** Scriptures not only give us the record of the crucifixion; they unfold its meaning. Narrative and explanation go side by side. If

<sup>2</sup> Cor. 5:21.  
Gal. 3:13.

Isa. 53:5:

a friend gives me a beautiful casket, he will give me the key. We are not left to guess at the import of that terrible event which took place on a green hill, without the city's wall, eighteen centuries since. We must not be misled by the assertion that the sacrifice on Calvary is so mysterious that we cannot presume to understand it. We have a right to understand the mysteries of grace so far as the Bible instructs us. By God Himself, in His inspired word, we are invited to understand Calvary. By our Lord Himself we are taught the place of His atonement in our redemption. Not only by word, as where He says that He came to give His life a ransom for many, but by the sacrament of the Supper which brings the broken body and the shed blood perpetually to remembrance. But the Cross is a mystery? Yea, verily,—strip the Cross of mystery and there is no Cross. “This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes.” Marvellous, therefore divine. The agnostic says: “Marvellous, therefore unintelligible,” and the sceptic, “Marvellous, therefore incredible.” Poor logicians. What God does He does in His divine way, not man-fashion, but the Spirit takes of the things of

Mat. 20:28.

Ps. 118:23.

Christ and shows them unto us. There are depths of truth in the Cross which we cannot fathom. Deut. 29:29. The secret things belong unto the Lord our God. But there are things which are revealed and which belong to us and to our children. It is wrong for us to ignore them under a false humility of ignorance. Christ died for our sins. Atonement provides for adoption. The chosen one can never forget the Cross. He will say that it was raised on Calvary for the sin of the world. Nay, he will say that he alone needs it all, every drop of blood, the entire sacrifice, the whole, great, rugged, cruel, blessed Cross of Christ, for his redemption and his hope.

The merits of our Savior are the ground of 2. His <sup>righteous-</sup> our adoption in another way. We <sup>ness be-</sup> are clothed in His righteousness. <sup>comes ours.</sup> We put on the Lord Jesus. "By Phil. 3:9. Rom. 13:14. 5:19. the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." We are not holy but He is holy, and as our sin is laid on Him, His holiness is laid on us. The chosen one can never earn his inheritance by works, yet he may have "the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." Thus the justice of God is not evaded, but satisfied. In Je-

sus Christ the law is honored, not abrogated. His perfect obedience is thrown over us like a robe, and so by the righteousness of one, the free gift comes to us. No wonder that Paul desired to be found in Him, not having his own righteousness. Let the chosen one beware of falling back from "the spirit of adoption" into the old legal spirit, which measures one's hope of salvation by his success in doing God's will. This is a subtle temptation of Satan, to persuade us to be despondent because our lives are imperfect. He decoys us down to the law basis, whereas it is our high privilege to stand on the foundations of grace, clothed in the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, and so "saved by his life."

Rom. 5:10.

In what then does the attractiveness of the Cross consist? How shall we explain its fascination, its impressiveness? Lessons from the Cross. There have been thousands of martyrs whose deaths, merely as historical events, have been outwardly more thrilling than that of Christ. Why have not these made the lasting impression upon the world which has been made by this one crucifixion on Calvary? Because God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.

This fact makes the moment when our Lord cried, "It is finished," the central point in the history of mankind.

From this point of view the believer is impressed with the guilt of that sin from which he is saved. He had not thought of it as being so grievous until he saw Christ on the cross as his ransom.

a. **The Sinsfulness of Sin.** The world trifles with sin and speaks of its guilt with flippant carelessness. It is "human nature." It is a misdemeanor which God can easily overlook. It is counterbalanced by many virtues. In many cases it is chiefly a misfortune for which the sinner is not seriously responsible. So the world looks at sin. Even the pulpit sometimes encourages men to regard themselves as unwilling captives of sin. A New York clergyman, not long ago, prayed, "O God, do not be too hard on us, for Thou knowest how difficult it is for us to do right." But the chosen one is brought face to face with the cross, and in the greatness of salvation he sees the greatness of guilt. Here the price of his redemption is paid, "not with corruptible things, as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ." Why this priceless sacrifice? "All this

<sup>1</sup> Pet. 1:18,  
19.

agony," he says, "to save me!" He takes his measurements of salvation, its length, its breadth, its height, its depth from the Cross, and he asks if the sacrifice is not too great. But everything connected with it is great. God Himself is great, and it is His salvation. The human soul is great. Immortality and eternity are great. Great is the blessedness of heaven, and as great the misery of hell. In seeing how grace abounds he begins to see how sin abounds. He beholds God resorting to this awful sacrifice; he sees Christ, who knows what sin is, coming to shed his blood that the sinner may be saved. And he asks himself, Is my sin then so cruel, so monstrous as this? And he feels that it was he himself who crucified the Lord of glory, that his wickedness platted the crown of thorns, and drove the nails, and pierced the bleeding side. No condemnation of the law smites his sin like this. The silent witness of the Cross against him is more terrible than all the thunders of Sinai. He trembles as he rejoices, to think what he has been saved from. At the Cross he has looked into hell, for the Cross points both ways. And he vows that never again will he add to

that sin which nailed his Savior to the accursed tree.

At the Cross the believer is also impressed with the poverty of those virtues which are merely human. His own righteousness

**b. The  
insufficiency  
of human  
goodness.**

never looks so mean as when he stands on Calvary. Once he fancied that his morality might at least commend him to the mercy of God. He now feels that this pride of character was one of his greatest sins. He further realizes that there was not in his heart a spark of obedient love to God. He has been saved in the midst of a life which men call good. Perhaps he was a man above reproach, scrupulous in all his dealings with his fellow men, a model husband and father, a courteous neighbor, popular for his amiable traits. And it was when he was honest, and kind, and highly respected, that Christ loved him, and died for him, and saved him. In all his integrity and sobriety, the precious blood was shed to obtain his pardon and reconciliation with God. The filthy rags of his righteousness were mercifully stripped off that he might be clothed in the righteousness of Christ. Such is the power of the Cross. It can save not only

the woman of Samaria, and the thief on the Cross, but even Nicodemus and the young man who had kept all the commandments. Not only publicans and harlots may enter the kingdom of heaven, but also the upright and the devout, if they will repent,—such as William Wilberforce called “the poor, wretched upper classes,”—those whom Lord Shaftesbury denominated “the rich and noble heathen of London, whose souls are starving.” Human virtues need not stand in our way. Christ will save us in spite of them, as he saved Paul. The blood of Christ avails for the most eminent examples of morality. The pride of goodness is indeed a formidable barrier in the way of salvation, a greater obstacle sometimes than all other vices, but there is not a man or woman so conspicuous for good behavior, so attractive because of gracious qualities of mind and heart, but that Christ can reach down and lift that soul out of sin and death, grant a free and full forgiveness, and an abundant entrance into the household of faith.

At the Cross the believer is impressed with the premeditation of the saving love of God. That is not the highest type of love which

c. The Eternity of redemptive love. acts from sudden impulse. It may be more dramatic in action, and more passionate in expression. Its outbursts may attract special attention and make it seem stronger than the calm, deliberate love which plans with forethought, and patiently works and waits. But extempore love is unstable, unreliable, and weak. Christ came to the earth with the Cross in mind. Nay, from eternity he had been bearing that Cross. The Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world. When Love first chose us it began to make sacrifice for us. When are we saved? Objectively on Calvary when Christ dies for us. Subjectively at conversion when we turn from sin to God. Completely in heaven when "we shall see him as he is." But ideally ages ago when God named us and God covenanted to redeem us. Atonement is eternal. The Cross was not an expedient suddenly devised for our salvation. The promise of redemption was made in time when man fell, but the purpose of redemption was formed in the timeless past. Atonement is as old as Adoption, and Adoption is as old as the Foreknowledge of God. Thus premeditated love is the lesson of Calvary. Our Savior had long been

looking forward to the Cross. He came to earth with this deliberate purpose of being slain. "For this cause came I unto this hour." His <sup>John 12:27.</sup> mind was full of it from the beginning of his ministry. With calm resolution he "steadfastly set his face to go to Jerusalem," toward the Cross. Love which thus deliberates and steadily moves toward its chosen end cannot fail. God so loved the world. In the beginning was the Cross. It is thus older than sin. In the striking words of the pastor of the City Temple of London ; "Sin struck our little world at a given moment—redemption never did. That is the difference between sin and redemption. Sin is a time incident ; redemption never can be that : sin is something that happened ; redemption is part of God \* \* \* The devil's range is measured by one stormy night; God's love belongs to God's eternity."

In every way the chosen one is impressed at the Cross with the dignity and grandeur of his calling. For him the Father eternally planned this wondrous redemption. For him the Son left the glory of heaven to suffer agony and death. Angels desire to look into this gospel. What must be the worth of <sup>Linger at the Cross.</sup>

the human soul ! What must be the blessedness in store for God's chosen one's ! How glorious their inheritance even now before the mortal puts on immortality ! Frail, unworthy, incomplete, they are heirs with Christ ! Here on earth they walk in heavenly places with Him ! What God hath prepared for them is already revealed to them by the Spirit ! They are subjects of God's peculiar watch and care ! And all this, and more, they owe to the infinite merits of the Savior who for them became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross.

## CHAPTER XI. THE INTERCESSION OF CHRIST.

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The hands of our great Intercessor never hang down, as Moses' did, nor does he need any one to hold them up.

—C. H. M.

The whole Trinity is present in the Christian's closet; the Father hears; the Son advocates his cause at the Father's right hand; the Holy Spirit intercedes in the heart of the believer.

—Anon.

The day never comes when the Lord Jesus is not at the side of His saints.

—F. B. Meyer.

We find an ally to our faith in the reality of prayer in the fact that it is always seconded by the Lord Jesus Christ. No believer ever prays alone. In the solitude of African wilds Dr. Livingstone had an infinite companion. In mid-ocean no shipwrecked sailor ever prays without a Friend at hand. We have an Advocate with the Father.

—Austin Phelps.

Our Savior often withdrew from the world to pray. In solitude He sought uninterrupted communion with God. Once at <sup>The prayers of Christ.</sup> least He prayed at length in the presence of His disciples. Many seasons of prayer He enjoyed of which no record is made. Herein He is our example, but to set an example was not his chief object. He prayed because He loved to pray. The Son of God, tabernacling in the flesh, felt the need of that refreshment and help which are found at the throne of grace.

This fact bears the same relation to our faith in prayer which Christ's resurrection bears to **The infallible proof that God hears prayer.** our hope of immortality. He rose from the dead; therefore we shall live again. He prayed; therefore we may pray in the sure confidence that God hears prayer. The efficacy of prayer stands or falls with the character of Jesus Christ. Just here we may rest all our arguments for prayers and all our answers to objections. The theory that prayer is vain makes Christ a deceiver, for He taught his disciples to pray. By precept and by example He committed Himself to the doctrine that if we ask we shall receive. If He was holy in character the power of prayer is a fact as firmly established as His holiness. For He prayed. He prayed as a man. His prayer was not alone spiritual communion with His Father. It was petition. He asked for definite mercies. This is evident from His prayer in the garden, His Passover prayer, and the prayer which He taught His disciples. He knew the value of supplication. If it were useless He would never have prayed. Every objection to prayer is therefore answered by His example. If we ever hesitate to go to the throne of grace

our doubts may be dissolved by this fact. The life and character of Jesus Christ establish no truth more surely than this, that the prayer of faith avails with God.

For what did our Savior pray? Doubtless much of His praying, in these secret interviews with His Father, was high spiritual intercourse to which no mortal can reach. But He sought what we all seek from God. As a man he needed comfort, guidance, <sup>The intercession of Christ began on earth.</sup> strength. He prayed for Himself.

In the garden He prayed that the cup might pass from Him. In His Passover prayer He besought God to glorify Him. Could we have overheard His prayers we may believe that in many respects they would have seemed not unlike those which good men have offered in all ages since His time. He also prayed for His disciples. In those mountain vigils He wrestled with God on behalf of the men whom He had chosen. This we gather from that prayer which He offered when He instituted the Supper. It is nearly all earnest petition. “I pray for them; I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me.” Security (11-16), Sanctity (17-19), Unity (21-23), Glory (24-26,) <sup>John 17.</sup>

—are the blessings which He invoked upon His chosen ones—Security in God necessary to Sanctity, personal Sanctity a preparation for spiritual Unity, and all issuing in the Glory which they are to share with Him.

A touching incidental evidence of this loving intercession is given in that word which He spoke to Peter. “And the Lord said, Simon, <sup>Lk. 22:31,32.</sup> Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not.” Through this affectionate disclosure, as through a window, we look upon our Savior in His private devotions. See Him naming Peter, and interceding for this wavering disciple that he may not fall away. We are impelled to infer that the names of His followers were thus often on His lips in prayer. He calleth His own sheep by name in His petitions. He prays for John, and for Thomas, for you and for me, and for all who shall believe on His name.

Before leaving the earth our Savior promised His chosen ones that He would pray for them <sup>Proof that Christ is now interceding for us.</sup> in heaven. “And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with

you forever." The disciples waited ten days and Pentecost came, and since that day the Holy Spirit has been with the church. The presence of the Comforter proves two facts, that Christ is enthroned, and that He is offering prevailing prayer for His people. If a city is in sore distress from famine, and sends a messenger for help, and if in a week an ample supply of provisions comes back to the afflicted people, they know that the messenger has reached his destination, and that he has advocated their case with success. In the last days Christ declared that He was about to return to His heavenly throne. He instructed His disciples to tarry at Jerusalem, promising them that they should receive power from on high, "not many days hence." Shortly the timid, despondent apostles were transformed into fearless, eloquent, successful preachers of the gospel. And from their day this same gospel has been the power of God unto salvation to millions. Wherefore? Because the Holy Ghost has come. What then? The presence of the Holy Spirit among men is proof of Christ's enthronement and availing intercession in heaven.

How may we conceive of the heavenly inter-

Acts 2:33.

John 16:28.

Acts 1:4-8.

**Nature of  
Christ's in-  
tercession.**

cession of Christ ? In answering this question we are to remember that He is now exalted on high to continue, on our behalf, the work which He began on earth. Intercession, in its broad sense, is His securing to us those benefits for which the Cross provided, so that it is not so much a new and distinct undertaking as the fulfilment and completion of His mission as Redeemer of his chosen ones.

That it is founded on his sacrifice is evident from the Scriptures. It was the High Priest who offered the sacrifice, and the High Priest who entered the Holy of Holies to appear before God on behalf of the people. Now Christ is

called "a priest forever after the order of Melchisedec." He "hath an unchangeable priesthood." This means, of course, that his priestly office continues in heaven, which corresponds to the Holy of Holies. That is, He has entered "into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And as the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies "once every year, not without blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people," and as this

Heb. 5:1, 9:  
7-7:17, 24

Heb. 9:24.

Heb. 9:7.

ceremony was "the example and shadow of heavenly things," we may understand that Christ crucified presents Himself before God as a perpetual plea for the redemption of his people. Thus "he ever liveth to make intercession for them. His intercession is His sacrifice. He is still our Mediator. The mighty plea which he made on Calvary he makes to-day before God and the hosts of heaven. The Atonement is the wonder of angels and archangels in the new Jerusalem.

Heb. 8:5.

Rev. 5: 11,  
12.

The Cross is all its splendor,

The Crucified its praise.

Those hands, pierced by our sin, are clasped in supplication for our good, a silent and eternal petition on behalf of every chosen disciple. The Lamb is in the midst of the throne. The Rev. 5:6. believer may sing,

Before the throne my Surety stands,

My name is written on his hands.

And herein we have one of the strongest proofs that the sacrifice of Christ was an offering made to God, and not chiefly a spectacle to move men, but an expiation, a satisfaction, moving God to pardon sin and to give gifts to men.

We may think of Christ's intercession as a special activity on his part to secure for us all

1 John 3:6,  
9.

**2. He pleads for the gifts of the Spirit.** spiritual blessings. It is the ideal state of the believer that he should

live without sin, and there are Christians who declare that for a given period they have not willfully wandered from Christ. Other Christians feel that they have not yet attained, neither are already perfect. If then we sin

1 John 2:1,2.

after adoption "we have an advocate with the Father." He does not excuse our sin. He does not encourage us to settle down into the persuasion that a sinless life is unattainable. But He appears for us at the bar of God when we are truly penitent for sin, and are trying to forsake it. And it is noteworthy that John connects this advocacy with the sacrifice of Christ, immediately adding, "He is the propitiation for our sins." Paul does the same in Romans 8:34, where the two facts that Christ died and that He is making intercession for us are closely yoked together. As Christians then we need not despair, even though we are conscious of sin. We need daily pardon, and for this Christ pleads.

Not only pardon but growth in grace, that

“holiness without which no man shall see the Lord,” is secured to us through Christ’s intercession. Whether he offers vocal petitions we do not know. He uses the language of heaven. Many blessings for which we have not prayed come to us. Revivals of religion spring up unexpectedly. Missionary enterprises, inspired from above, are set on foot. Such men as Wesley, Luther, Moody, are raised up to do special work. Organizations like the Sunday School, the Young Men’s Christians Association, the Salvation Army, the Christian Endeavor Society, appear in order to supplement the work of the church. How shall we account for them? Christ is praying for the world. He is not leaving the interests of His kingdom solely to our prayers. His mighty faith is laying the case before God.

And this suggests that it is a part of Christ’s intercessory work to present our prayers to the Father. By this is meant that in some way our Saviour makes our petitions, confessions, thanksgivings acceptable to God and prevalent with Him. Of themselves our prayers are poor and weak. Sometimes they are unwise. Faith is small and

3. He pre-  
sents our  
prayers to  
God.

Eph. 2:18.  
3:12.

John 14:6.  
16: 23,24.

Mat. 18: 19,  
20.

Rom. 8:26.

desire fluctuates. We are not importunate enough. Christ supplements our weakness. Paul says that we have access to the Father through Christ. Our Savior declares, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." It is as if when we pray Christ took us by the hand, and accompanied us to the throne of grace. Thus we pray in His name. A good Christian once testified that all his prayers had been answered which ended "for Christ's sake." This is the ground on which our Lord promises that the agreeing prayer of two or three disciples shall be answered. "It shall be done for them"—not because of their agreement, but because "there am I in the midst of them."

We see the difference between the intercession of Christ and the aid of the Holy Spirit in prayer. The Spirit works within us, inspiring our desires, quickening our faith, "helping our infirmities." He may be likened to a parent teaching a child how to pray. We open our mouth and the Spirit fills it. Our best prayers are the utterances of the Spirit speaking through us. God does not wait to see what man will pray for, hesitating what to give until the wish

**The intercession of Christ different from the aid of the Spirit in prayer.**

of His children shall have been expressed. He moves us to ask. He "regenerates our desires." Our prayer is not ours. "Praying in the Spirit," we are moved to ask what God designs to give. <sup>Eph. 6:18.</sup> The Psalmist understood prayer. "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and he shall give thee <sup>Ps. 37:4.</sup> the desires of thine heart." Simply because delight in God awakens those desires which He is ready to satisfy. The defect in our prayers is often back of our praying in our ambitions. The Holy Spirit purifies the source of prayer, viz: "the desires of the heart." He creates that hungering which God will feed. The intercession of Christ, on the other hand, may be likened to a parent praying for a child, asking God to hear the childish petitions, rectifying and amplifying those petitions with larger faith and intelligence. Thus our prayers are reinforced, purified, enlarged by our great Advocate. What we rightly ask for, upon this He sets the seal of His intercession. What we ask amiss He corrects. What we neglect to seek He supplements and secures. Thus His intercession gains for us all the gifts needful to salvation.

The intercession of Christ is thus the great encouragement of His chosen ones to be often

**The peculiar power of prayer since the time of Christ.**

*1 Sam. 12:23.*

*Dan. 6:10.*

*Gen. 18:  
23-33.*

*Rom. 12:12.  
Lk. 18:1.  
Acts 2:42.  
Colos. 4:2.  
1 Thess. 5:  
17.*

at the throne of grace. If under the dim light of the old dispensation the faithful Samuel could regard it a sin to cease praying, even when conditions were discouraging; surely the Christian believer to-day is to be greatly blamed if he neglects prayer. If Daniel, under adverse circumstances, prayed and gave thanks three times, daily, should not Christ's followers now be found as often on their knees before God? If the intercession of Abraham for Sodom could avail on the ground of the presence of a few righteous men in the city, what reliance should we place on the intercession of God's own Son, based on His atoning work. Our prayers stand in the strength of all that our Lord has done and is doing on our behalf. Behind them, in them, is His Cross, His pleading voice. Of themselves they are feeble, but through Him they are mighty. Therefore we should be instant in prayer.

## CHAPTER XII.

### THE BAPTISM OF THE SPIRIT.

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As Christ, the second person of the Godhead, came to earth to make atonement for sin and to give eternal life, and as sinners we must receive him by faith in order to forgiveness and sonship, so the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Godhead, came to earth to communicate the 'power from on high'; and we must as believers in like manner receive him by faith in order to be qualified for service.

—*A. J. Gordon.*

I pray to God this day to make me an extraordinary Christian.

—*Whitefield.*

Now, if we would be endued with power we must come into right relation with the Spirit. We came into right relation with God for salvation by faith in Christ. We must come into right relation with God for power by faith in the Spirit. There are many Christians saved through Christ who are not endued with the power of the Spirit.

—*A. C. Dixon.*

I just lay down before God and asked him to empty me and fill me with his Spirit.

—*Finney.*

This is the secret of every failure; we do not believe in the Holy Ghost.

—*Bishop Westcott.*

I can't explain how God gives me such acceptance with men and women, except that I have given him myself unconditionally, and that he in return has given me the power of the Holy Ghost.

—*B. Fay Mills.*

When once the distinct recognition of what the indwelling of the Spirit is meant to bring is brought home to

the soul, and it is ready to give up all to be partaker of it, the believer may ask and expect what may be termed a baptism of the Spirit.

—*Rev. Andrew Murray.*

Once 'twas busy planning,  
 Now 'tis trustful prayer;  
 Once 'twas anxious caring,  
 Now he has the care;  
 Once 'twas what I wanted,  
 Now what Jesus says;  
 Once 'twas constant asking,  
 Now 'tis ceaseless praise;  
 Once it was my working,  
 His it hence shall be;  
 Once I tried to use him,  
 Now he uses me;  
 Once the power I wanted,  
 Now the Mighty One;  
 Once for self I labored,  
 Now for him alone.

—*A. B. Simpson.*

There are two marked spiritual experiences which come to God's chosen ones through the <sup>Two fold work of the Spirit.</sup> Holy Spirit. The first is conversion, that wondrous change of heart and life which our Savior calls the new birth. Every child of God knows what it is. It stands by itself in his memory as the beginning of all his joys. It is that special work of the Spirit whereby the soul is brought into living union with Jesus Christ.

The second experience is the baptism of the Spirit. It is the coming of a new power into the soul, a power which raises the believer to

high levels of Christian living, and makes him efficient as a workman of God. It gives him victory over sin, and enables him to labor fruitfully in God's vineyard. Those who receive this baptism are characterized by deep piety, strong faith, abounding zeal, and useful lives.

Let us get these two gifts of God distinctly in mind. The Bible repeatedly distinguishes between them, and furnishes illustrations of both. The one gift is the Holy Spirit for renewal; the other is the Holy Spirit for sanctification and ministry.

Our Savior did not need the first, but he received the second. He was never converted but he received power at his baptism

Mat. 3:16, 17.  
Lk. 3:22.

when the Holy Ghost descended upon him. After this everything was done

Illustrated  
in Christ's  
Life.

in the power of the Spirit. "I cast out devils by the Spirit of God," He said. Through the

Mat. 12:28.

Holy Ghost He "gave commandments unto the apostles." His great work of atonement was

Acts 1:2.

accomplished by the same power when He "through the Eternal Spirit offered himself

Heb. 9:14.

without spot to God." Thus the prophecy of Isaiah was fulfilled, "The spirit of the Lord

Isa. 11:2.

shall rest upon him, the spirit of wisdom and

understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord."

To the early disciples this gift of the Spirit came subsequently to their conversion. On the

**Illustrated  
in the  
lives of the  
first  
disciples.** day of Pentecost by the descent of the Spirit the followers of Jesus, hitherto a band of timid, inconstant, self-distrustful men and women, were

transformed into bold and persuasive witnesses to the truth. That they regarded this gift as of great importance, and as one for all believers, appeared soon after when they sent Peter and John to the converts in Samaria, to pray for them that they might receive the Holy Ghost, "for as yet he was fallen upon none of

Acts 8:14-17.

of them; only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost."

Evidently one may be within the fold of Jesus Christ, and yet a stranger to this ministry of the Spirit. The fact is again made clear in that striking incident which took place at Ephesus. There Paul found certain disciples whom he asked, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" And they said unto him, "We

Acts 19:1-7.

have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost?" Then the apostle instructed them and laid his hands upon them and they received the great gift.

The believer's experience of God's grace in regeneration should enable him to understand, and should prepare him to appropriate the parallel blessing of the baptism of the Spirit. For these two experiences are strikingly alike in many respects, so much so, indeed, that the baptism of the Spirit has sometimes been called "the second conversion."

Resem-  
blances  
between  
regeneration  
by the  
Spirit and  
the baptism  
of the  
Spirit.

a. There is an occasion when they come for the first time to the believing soul. The child of God recalls that epoch in his life when Christ was formed within him, the happy day that fixed his choice on his Redeemer. So too—if he has received it—can he remember the gift of the Spirit as a distinct event in his religious life. Miss Frances E. Willard for some six or seven years after her conversion lived the common Christian life of alternate triumph and defeat, a constant struggle with sin. Then she longed for freedom and power and gave herself anew

Both take  
place at a  
definite  
time.

to God. The result she thus describes: "A great peace came to my soul. I cannot describe the deep welling up of joy that gradually possessed me. I was utterly free from care. I was blithe as a bird that is good for nothing but to sing. I did not ask, Is it duty? but instinctively knew what to do. The conscious, emotional presence of Christ through the Holy Spirit held me. I ran about upon His errands just from love. Life was a halcyon day."

b. There is the same sense of need and of helplessness in both these soul crises. <sup>The same</sup> <sup>conscious-</sup> <sup>ness of sin in</sup> <sup>both.</sup> The Holy Spirit convinces of sin. The sense of unforgiven sin prompts the penitent to seek deliverance through Christ. The Christian, knowing that his iniquity is pardoned, has yet a still deeper sense of personal demerit. B. Fay Mills testifies, "I have had more contrition for sin in one moment since I began to live a godly life than in all my ungodly life." This feeling is stronger in the saint than in the sinner because if we struggle against a stream we are more conscious of its power than if we float with the current. If the believer is not content to live on this low plane, he seeks the fulness of the Spirit. He already

has "redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." He now receives a new gift, and is "strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man."

Eph. 1:7.  
3:16.

c. There is the same act of appropriating faith in both instances. The sinner believes on the Lord Jesus Christ and is saved. Similarly by a definite act of faith the believer receives the Spirit for consecration and power. The gift must be taken.

Both are ap-  
propriated  
by faith.

As Paul says, we "receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. It would be vain for the sinner simply to pray for salvation. Let him take the water of life freely. So it would be vain for the believer to ask for the baptism of the Spirit without laying hold of that blessing. Here applies with special pertinence the word of Christ, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Yet as the choice of Christ by the sinner is sometimes involved in a minor choice—like the giving up of an evil habit, or the taking up of a cross—so the appropriation of the Spirit by the believer may take place in some spiritual crisis wherein the soul draws close to

Gal. 3:2, 14.

Mk. 11:24.

God without foreseeing at the time all the blessing that is to follow.

**d.** These experiences are alike in this—that they may seem to the recipient to take place either instantaneously or gradually. Some Christians can describe a vivid and thrilling revolution of life, like that of Saul on the Damascus road; when Christ suddenly and gloriously filled the soul. Others declare that the coming of the kingdom to them was like the imperceptible stealing of the morning sunlight over an awakening world. Wesley tells us that his conversion occurred “at a quarter before nine o’clock on the evening of Wednesday, May 24, 1738.” Other disciples have testified that they could not remember the day nor the month when they accepted God’s salvation. Enough if they bear the marks of the Lord Jesus. So we are to determine whether we have received the Spirit by appropriate tests. The important question is not as to the process but as to the result. Is the blessing ours? That question, like the question whether we have accepted Christ, is to be answered by reference to our present spiritual condition. It is not of great moment when we

**They come  
in different  
ways to dif-  
ferent per-  
sons.**

entered the narrow way if so be we are in it, and it is not of first importance how we gained the treasure so long as we possess it. There is doubtless a definite time when the believer receives the Spirit, as there is a moment known to God when the soul is transformed into Christ's likeness. Usually both gifts come through conscious seeking and at specific dates. In some few cases the two experiences are almost simultaneous, the baptism of the Spirit following hard on the new birth. Usually, for want of enlightenment and faith at the time of conversion, the second blessing is delayed. Paul received it <sup>Acts 9:17.</sup> three days after his conversion. Eminent saints like Edward Payson; James Brainerd Taylor, Charles G. Finney, Dwight L. Moody, testify that they had followed Jesus for years before receiving the gift of the Spirit. But the one promise is made to all, of this twofold blessing, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." <sup>Acts 2:38.</sup>

e. Both experiences make themselves known to the recipient. The child of God knows that

**Both blessings verify themselves in the heart of the believer.**

he has been born again. The believer who has received the Spirit is aware of that fact. There is no need of uncertainty in either case.

If, when the blessing comes, we do not fully recognize it and understand its meaning, yet as experience strengthens and the spiritual understanding is clarified we come into a clear consciousness of our possessions. The contrast between our present and our former estate is too marked to escape our notice. In reading the Scriptures we find the explanation of our deepest experiences. The baptism there described and promised we recognize as ours. We have the witness in ourselves that God has saved us to the uttermost.

*f.* Each of these experiences has its distinct place and purpose. This is clearly set forth in the Word of God. Conversion is unto salvation; the baptism of the Spirit is unto sanctification. The one is enough to redeem the soul from death, the other is sufficient to secure present victory over sin and to equip for service. The former gives peace, the latter gives power. The first is for renewal, the second for ministry.

**Both blessings are bestowed with a view to certain ends.**

Without conversion the sinner cannot enter heaven, without the enduement of the Spirit the believer cannot go on unto perfection in Christian experience and service.

g. These gifts are alike in this, that they are freely offered of God to all who will accept them. "Ho! every one that thirsteth." is addressed alike to the impenitent and to the Christian. In both instances the way to life is narrow and few there be that find it. We mark striking differences in the spiritual attainments of God's chosen ones. Some are saved "yet so as by fire," while others are "filled with all the fulness of God." Between these extremes there are many grades of vigor and consecration. There are disciples who seem very like people of the world. There are Christians who are still living under law, faithful in commandment keeping and in good works but strangers to the deeper life in Christ. A few have tarried in prayer and they testify that there is a crisis in the Christian life similar to the crisis of regeneration in the worldly life. The Christian is converted to the Spirit as the unbeliever is converted to Christ. This blessing is not limited to the few except as it is rejected

Both gifts within the reach of all.

by the many. All Christians need it and all may have it.

The Scriptures represent this gift of the Spirit under three forms:

- I. Sealing.
- II. Infilling.
- III. Anointing.

John 6:27.

I. Of Christ we read, "Him hath God the <sup>The Sealing</sup> Father sealed." The priest in the <sup>of the Spirit.</sup> temple selected an unblemished lamb and stamped it with the temple seal to certify that it was fit for sacrifice. So the Father sealed the Son when the heavens opened and the voice declared, "This is my beloved Son." It was God's attestation of the deity and the authority of Jesus Christ.

Mat. 3:17;  
17:5.

Eph. 1:13.

Similarly the believer is sealed by the Spirit. "In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." In this verse we find mentioned the two experiences of belief unto salvation, and the sealing of the Spirit unto sanctification.

In His office of Sealing, the Spirit stamps His likeness upon us and thus attests our acceptance with God, sets us apart to holy uses, and assures us of final salvation.

Sealing makes us sure that God accepts us. A seal on a document authenticates it as genuine. So the seal of the Spirit marks the believer as the true child of God. This was the first token granted to Wesley that he had received the gift of the Spirit. On the return voyage from Georgia to England he became deeply conscious of God's presence and favor. Christians should seek "perfect assurance," and should accept even the beginnings of it as evidence of the gift of the Spirit.

Sealing marks us as the peculiar people and property of God. Paul writes to Timothy, "Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity." Here God is represented as recognizing His own by the twofold seal of Ownership and Obedience.

The Christian is not to live all his days in the seventh of Romans. By the sealing of the Spirit he is to pass into the fifteenth and sixteenth of John. He is to be lifted above the plane of constant temptation to the high level of

Sealing at-  
tests our ac-  
ceptance  
with God.

2 Tim. 2:19.

**Rom. 6:14.** God's promise, "Sin shall not have dominion over you." Few believers are made holy at conversion. Many never get beyond the stage of personal effort, a disheartening struggle with sin. Some few are sanctified, set apart from the world, and made holy. This is brought about by the Spirit, not by human endeavor. It is a low and unscriptural view of the life in Christ which teaches that that life must of necessity be mingled with elements from the old life of sin. Paul has no such conception of God's work in the soul. "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly, and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Sanctify you wholly! Every thought may be brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. Every motive, aim, choice, affection may be taken into the keeping of God.

**1 Thes. 5:  
23.**

**2 Cor. 10:5.**

**Eph. 4:30.**

The seal of the Spirit guarantees the final salvation of God's chosen ones. In the day of redemption they are to be recognized by the impress of the Spirit upon them. Paul says to the Ephesians, "And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of

**Sealing  
marks  
believers  
for final  
redemption.**

redemption ” Says Bickersteth, “The allusion to the seal as a pledge of purchase would be peculiarly intelligible to the Ephesians, for Ephesus was a maritime city and an extensive trade in timber was carried on there by the shipmasters of neighboring ports. The method of purchase was this. The merchant after selecting his timber, stamped it with his own signet, which was an acknowledged sign of ownership. He often did not carry off his possession at the time; it was left in the harbor with other floats of timber, but it was chosen, bought and stamped; and in due time the merchant sent a trusty agent with the signet, who, finding that timber which took a corresponding impress, claimed and brought it away for his master’s use. Thus the Holy Spirit impresses on the soul now the image of Jesus Christ; and this is the sure pledge of the everlasting inheritance.”

The Lord knoweth them that are His and sets His mark upon them. Even on earth they can be discovered as being no longer conformed to this world. “Glory is in them begun.” There may be some uncertainty in the case of one who has not sought and received the gift of the

Spirit, but of one who has been “sealed unto the day of redemption” there can be no doubt.

II. The infilling of the Spirit is the gift of Power. “And Jesus being full of the Holy

<sup>The infilling of the Spirit.</sup> Ghost returned from Jordan.” Thus he was equipped for his great work.

How incompetent, weak and vacil-

<sup>Acts 2:4.</sup> lating were the apostles before the day of Pentecost. Then “they were all filled with the

Holy Ghost” and became new men. Thenceforth they had power according to the Savior’s promise, “Ye shall receive power, after that the

<sup>Acts 1:8.</sup> Holy Ghost is come upon you.” By this power

<sup>Acts 4:8.</sup> Peter, “filled with the Holy Ghost” preached his first great sermon before the rulers and elders at Jerusalem. By this power Stephen,

<sup>Acts 6:5.</sup> “a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost.” became the first martyr in the church. By this

power all the servants of God in all ages have accomplished great things. To all workers for Christ this infilling of the Spirit is indispensable.

Not only to minsters and missionaries, not only to evangelists and Bible teachers, but to every Christian who would undertake the humblest labor in the Master’s vineyard, God

himself addresses this exhortation, “Be filled Eph. 5:18. with the Spirit.”

Mark some of the results of this infilling. There is a certain courage and humble boldness imparted. “We ought to obey God Acts 5:29. rather than men” is the language of Infilling gives courage. disciples under this baptism. Great wickedness entrenched in the passions, customs and worldly interests of men, cause timid Christians to quail. Great is Diana of the Ephesians, and brave is he who withstands her worship. To do so he must be filled with the Spirit. Then he is not afraid. When Christians are full of the Holy Ghost they dare to undertake forbidding work. They fear not to take risks for God and to lead forlorn hopes.

No one can do efficient work for God who has misgivings as to the truth or the power of the Gospel. When full of the Spirit we Infilling gives us confidence in the Sword of the Spirit. have undimmed faith in the sufficiency of Christ for the salvation of souls, in the adequacy of His grace for every need of man. When Bishop Colenso resorted to schemes of education and reformation for the conversion of South Africa he lost all power and failed to benefit the

natives. When Hans Egede told the story of the Cross to the degraded Greenlanders God honored His Word and many souls were converted. Ministers and laymen who neglect the Gospel and take up with schemes of social and political reforms are leaning upon a broken reed. The infilling of the Spirit will bring men back to confidence in the Gospel as God's power unto salvation. Then they will labor expectantly, looking for results. A great hope will inspire their efforts, and their building will not be wood, hay, stubble. The wisdom of this world makes improvements upon the divine plan of salvation, but the wisdom that is from above lays hold on the unsearchable riches of Christ.

The infilling of the Spirit kindles love in the soul of the chosen one. Many Christians are **infilling arouses the affections.** conscious of lack of feeling, a barrenness of heart toward God. But when the Holy Spirit fills them their affections are quickened, and they cry, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee." Temptations lose their power, for sin has no allurements. The believer cannot generate this new love for himself. It is one of the fruits of the

Spirit. And not only love to God, but to the church and to mankind. When "full of the Holy Ghost" we are led to think, not of what we can get from the church, but of what we can do for the church. It then appears as "the body of Christ," and we sing,

I love thy kingdom, Lord—  
The house of thine abode;  
The church our blest Redeemer saved  
With his own precious blood. . .

Filled with the Spirit we are no longer critical, fastidious, censorious. We do not judge our fellow disciples, nor do we resent injuries. "Charity thinketh no evil." And our hearts go out to all our fellow men. We are no longer indifferent to the salvation of friends and neighbors. The great world lying in wickedness and sin appeals to our sympathies as it did to Christ's, and our hearts desire and prayer to God for all men is that they might be saved. There is no sign of the Holy Spirit's presence which is more reliable and inspiring than this longing on the part of Christians for the conversion of sinners to God.

By the infilling of the Holy Spirit earthly passions are subdued, evil propensities eradicated, holy ambitions created. The Bible places

**Infilling gives victory over sin.** no limit on the degree of sanctification which is possible to the believer. If he is filled with the Holy Ghost there is no room in him for sin. The conquest of his carnal appetites is virtually constant and complete. His body is "kept under." He himself is "kept by the power of God." If any reader doubts the possibility of complete sanctification in this life let him seek it persistently in faith and he will doubt no more. Thousands have attained to this estate. They testify to it as clearly and confidently as any Christian testifies to his conversion. If we are to believe the one why not the other? God promises the gift. Those who have accepted it testify with one voice that the work is all of God. They have not gained this high level through struggle but through surrender. They have simply let the Spirit in to fill them with all the fulness of God.

Acts 10:38.

III. Anointing differs from Sealing and Infilling. In the address to Cornelius, Peter said **The Anointing of the Spirit.** that "God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power." Our Savior himself appropriates the prophecy of Isaiah, "The Spirit of

1 Cor. 9:27.  
1 Pet. 1:5.

the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor."

Lk. 4:18.

Here we have the illuminating office of the Spirit. Our Lord promised to his disciples that "the Spirit of truth" should guide them into all truth. This Spirit of truth "the world cannot receive." Our apprehension of spiritual truth does not de-

John 16:13.

pend upon our learning nor yet upon intellectual acumen. "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Much of the brightest and strongest intellect of the world has been characterized by dense spiritual ignorance. Many believers hold to the great doctrinal truths of the Bible without any deep spiritual acquaintance with the same. It is such a belief that has given ground for the reproach against "a dead orthodoxy" and "slavery to creeds."

When the Christian receives the anointing of the Spirit he gains a spiritual discernment of truth. It "makes him of quick understanding." Isa. 11:3. His mental faculties are invigorated and illuminated "Ye have an unc-  
tion [R. V. anointing] from the Holy One, and ye know all things \* \* \*" Under this

A ready  
mind.

1 John 2:20.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 2:12.

<sup>2</sup> Tim. 2:7.

<sup>2</sup> Cor 1:20,  
21.

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 8:1.

anointing the mind relishes the revelations of the Word of God. "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." The reception of divine truth depends upon the spiritual condition of the understanding. When once we are anointed with the Spirit there is a verisimilitude and sweet reasonableness in the message of God. We are not reasoned into acceptance of doctrine but doctrine fits into our soul as a key into its lock. Doubts are dissolved and truth appears divinely beautiful. The Lord "gives us understanding in all things." Then we easily lay hold of God's promises for "God hath anointed us." Then the Bible becomes precious and is full of meaning. The Holy Spirit is our teacher and we yield our minds to his instruction. "Knowledge puffeth up." Worldly philosophy and learning foster pride of intellect, and an age of great mental achievement wanders from the revealed truths of the Scriptures into all manner of unbelief. Speculation is rife when the mind is not submissive to the Spirit. How much we need to-day to bring back to the truth as it is in Jesus a church which is waver-

ing in its allegiance to some of the most clearly revealed and distinctive truths of the Christian religion.

Our Savior was “anointed to preach.” Anointing gives utterance. A tongue of fire sat upon the disciples on the day of Pentecost. The Savior’s promise was,

“It shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.” The believer thus anointed can bear testimony for Christ, thus fulfilling his word, “Ye shall be witnesses unto me.” He may not

Mat. 10:19,  
20,

be delivered from all fear, whether in public or in private speaking, nor find great fluency of speech, though these gifts may be graciously vouchsafed. But he will be moved and sustained by the Spirit. His tongue will be touched with a coal from off the altar. He will be made wise

Acts 1:8.

in winning souls. The apostles “spake as the Spirit gave them utterance,” and Paul, not trusting to human eloquence, requested the Ephesians to pray for him that utterance might be given him. So Mr. Spurgeon was wont to pause in his sermon, and say, “Brethren, pray for me, I must have more of the power of the

Isa. 6:6, 7.

Acts 2:4.

Eph. 6:19.

Holy Spirit." This anointing is indispensable to every minister who would "preach in demonstration of the Spirit and of power," to every Sunday School teacher if his message is to come to his pupils "not in word only but also in power and in the Holy Ghost," and to every witness bearer who would edify the church and impress the world.

Utterance in prayer comes in this same way through the anointing of the Spirit.

Rom. 8:15.  
Gal. 4:6.

**Prevailing prayer.** By the spirit we cry "Abba, Father."

Eph. 2:18.

Through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Sometimes we are tongue-tied in prayer. At other times there seems to be no reality in our devotions. Perhaps there are days when we feel no desire to approach the throne of grace. We need the anointing of the Spirit. Such anointing may not give us great flow of language. It is indeed possible for one to seem "gifted in prayer," and yet to lack power with God. What we are to seek is such an anointing that we may have communion with God in prayer and power to prevail. "The Spirit helpeth our infirmities." Then we talk with God as friend with friend. The publican prayed in the Spirit though his

Rom. 8:26.

petition was a short one. How many formal prayers we shall have to answer for under the charge of "idle words." May God anoint His people with the Spirit that they may have power in prayer.

How earnestly should every Christian seek the baptism of the Spirit. If any young disciple reads these words let <sup>This gift to be earnestly sought.</sup> him resolve not to live on a low plane of Christian experience. Mr. Spurgeon in one of his sermons has a striking picture of a young convert lingering in the "cell of Penitence," while a bright angel is beckoning him on into the perfect freedom of a full salvation. It is not necessary to wait a long time for this baptism. It must be sought earnestly and with importunate prayer. It must be desired above all other things and with appropriating faith. The seeker must give up every known sin and yield himself wholly to God. He must seek the gift not for personal and selfish ends but for God's glory. His ambition must be not to use the Spirit but to be used by the Spirit. Let the Christian seek this gift in this way and he shall surely receive it. He may have to wait on the Lord for it, but God is will-

ing and ready to give it to all who seek. This is the one great need of the church to-day. Come, Holy Spirit, come.

PART III.  
SPIRITUAL RESULTS.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### GRATITUDE.

---

Thou that hast given so much to me,  
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.  
See how Thy beggar works on thee  
By art.

Not thankful when it pleaseth me;  
As if Thy blessings had spare days;  
But such a heart, whose pulse may be  
Thy praise. —*George Herbert.*

The grateful spirit alone believes because it alone acknowledges the source of its life. The grateful alone finds out God. It alone discovers its glorious Maker in its own faculties, its own perceptions, its own capacities of happiness; and with the grateful one out of the ten it falls down before Him giving thanks. —*Canon Mozely.*

Gratitude is love responding to love. —*Millar.*

Looking in through the broken, patched window of an humble cabin one day, a minister saw a poor, gray-haired, bent son of toil, at a rude table, with hands raised to God, and his eyes fixed on some crusts of bread with a cup of water, in all humility and contentment exclaiming, "This, and Jesus Christ too ! This, and Jesus Christ too!" —*Guthrie.*

Thankfulness arises from the consciousness of being chosen in Christ. Its foundation is the divine assurance, "Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine." Not The sense of Isa. 43:1  
adoption  
awakens  
gratitude.

Hab. 3:18.

earthly blessings but spiritual gifts are the cause of gratitude. The prophet says, "I will joy in the God of my salvation." And this, "although the fig tree shall not blossom." All material comforts seem small beside this. All temporal troubles and losses seem unimportant if one is assured that he is a member of God's elect family. It is the Christian who is rich. He is an heir of heaven. Angels are his ministers. In his personal redemption he traces the designs of an eternal wisdom and grace. Nothing can take from him his crown of rejoicing. It matters not whether in earthly treasure he is rich or poor. It is of no great moment whether his temporal plans succeed or fail. The time is short. He is a pilgrim. Let his joy be in the God of his salvation. Let every step be an anthem, every breath a song.

Our adoption in Christ brings into mind four great facts which awaken gratitude.

1. The gift came to us unmerited. We did not deserve a place in God's family. The honor <sup>Adoption a gift to the undeserving.</sup> came to us from the unsolicited love of God. We did nothing to earn the pardon. We brought no price in our hands. Our case was that of the debtors in the

parable, of whom it is said, "And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both." We see it now though we did not see it at first. The hideous tyranny of sin is not felt by the unconverted. "A serpent is never seen at its full length till it is dead." Now that we can look back to the hole of the pit whence we were digged we gratefully adore the grace that saved us while we were yet sinners.

2. A second incentive to gratitude is the thought of the cost of our adoption. If we have ever fancied God's love an easy-going indulgence, a love that says, "Let the sin go—let all sinners be saved," our tarrying at Calvary has corrected this notion. Christ died that we might be chosen in Him. The world wonders why God permits sin in view of the misery which it brings on mankind. But God has suffered far more than His children by the permission of sin. Sin, our sin, has cost Him the eternal Cross. This He has borne that we might be made kings and priests unto Him. His choosing us was not a light thing to do. Before it could be done the precious blood must be shed. Therefore at the foot of

Lk. 7:42.

Isa. 51:1.

the Cross gratitude is a deep passion of the Christian heart.

3. Gratitude is strengthened again by the spiritual comforts which adoption has brought

**Benefits** in its train. Earthly parents some-

**which follow** times bring children into the family adoption.

and leave them to grow up as they

may. God chooses us and then nourishes and trains us. He has been with us all along the

Ps. 21:5.

way. Our glory is great in His salvation. He

has more than fulfilled His promises in our experience. Not only for the original gift of sonship but for all that sonship has brought are we

grateful,—for peace of conscience and the hope of heaven, for joy in service and for communion in prayer, for growing knowledge of truth and

for sweet comfort in trouble, for fellowship with Christ and for growth in grace. We praise

Him in whom are all our springs. Adoption means much. It means all that has followed

upon that first choice of God.

4. It means also all that will follow, and herein is a fourth spur to thankfulness. There

**The joy of hope.** is a kind of anticipatory gratitude in

view of what God is about to bestow. Our adoption is the guarantee of rich things to

come. Past mercies are a pledge of future good. "The Lord hath been mindful of us: he <sup>Ps. 115:12.</sup> will bless us." The consequences of adoption reach out into the infinite future and gratitude takes wings and follows after. We are daily thankful for daily mercies yet to come. Gratitude pays its debt in advance assured that "He that spared not his own Son will with him also <sup>Rom. 8:32.</sup> freely give us all things." This is the logic of Christian experience. Adoption—therefore sanctification and glory. Gratitude lives in the promises, already possessing the substance of things hoped for. "Far into distant worlds she pries, and brings <sup>eternal glories near.</sup>" Thus Peter declares that the elect anticipate their coming blessedness and are grateful in advance. "Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: <sup>1 Pet. 1:8, 9.</sup> Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls." The believer already receives the end, the final reward of his faith. Heaven is now his. In this he rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of the coming glory. For this he gives thanks. On account of this

he loves life because of his privileges, and is fearless of death because of his hopes.

But true gratitude goes much farther than this. It loves the giver more than the **God His own best gift.** It sees in the gift not so much a gain to self as a token from God.

True gratitude never degenerates into a genial form of self-congratulation. Dr. Chalmers, in his sermon, "Gratitude not a sordid affection," declares that we should be thankful to the Being who loves us rather than to the Being who confers benefits upon us. God Himself is our imperishable treasure. "Thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Our Gratitude is not the glow of a selfish enjoyment but the response of a quickened affection. We are grateful not because we are gratified but because we are beloved of God.

True gratitude then rejoices in the fulfillment of God's plan in the world. It praises God for every soul adopted into the family. The believer shares in the joy of heaven over the sinner that repenteth. We are grateful not only for our own salvation but for that of all who are saved. How characteristic of Paul was such

vicarious gratitude. "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you." This is one of the purest joys of the Christian life, to rejoice in new accessions to the chosen family. "We give thanks to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus, and of the love which ye have to all the saints, for the hope which is laid up for you in heaven." Every Christian understands this feeling. It is gratitude to God for the work which He is carrying on in the hearts of men. When a revival of religion visits a church or a city, one of the richest blessings connected with it is the deepening of joy among believers because of the conversion of great numbers to Christ. Even the report of a revival in a distant city and the conversion of strangers will awaken thankfulness in the Christian as he reads the report of the Holy Spirit's work. And if it be the conversion of a very dear friend no words can express the joy which springs up in the soul of a Christian father and mother, brother or sister or friend. Sometimes gratitude for the conversion of another seems stronger than that for our own adoption into God's family. What

Phil. 1:3.

Colos. 1:3-5.

inexpressible thankfulness is theirs who are privileged to win many souls to Christ. The joy of leading one soul into the kingdom is worth a lifetime of effort. No Christian minister can be content without this reward of his labors. Whatever comforts, enjoyment, prosperity may attend him, if God does not honor his ministry by the conversion of souls he is a miserable man. But if many of his people find the pearl of great price and rejoice in the hope of sin forgiven he is rewarded a thousand fold. Whatever his trials he goes about with a light heart. The secret of his rejoicing is in the salvation of souls. It is that same gratitude which filled Paul's heart when he wrote to the Thessalonians, "We are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the

<sup>2 Thes 2:13.</sup> Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."

If these lines fall under the eye of any young man who is thinking of the ministry for a life work let him weigh this consideration with care. If he enters upon such a life for its literary advantages, or because of its social respectability, or for its

**Motives for  
entering the  
ministry.**

opportunities for ease, or for the purpose of earning a living, he will find it no bed of roses but will say with Melancthon that it is "the misery of miseries," and at last will with difficulty give an account of his stewardship. But if he seeks souls he will surely succeed and the sweetest and highest rewards of the Christian life will be his. There is no honor which a mortal man can receive from God like that of being sent forth as a messenger of the Gospel of Peace. There is no opportunity in other callings for doing good which can for a moment compare with the opportunities of the Christian ministry.

It is said, that we do not want all men to be ministers, that a man can serve God in business or in the secular profession. But if a young man has the possibilities of the Christian ministry set before him, if he hears God's call to that sacred office, he is favored and honored. It would be a mistake for him to drop into a small sphere of power after such a vocation. As Mr. Spurgeon says, "It would be a pity for a minister of the Gospel to drivel down into a king." Though he labors in the humblest parish, struggling with poverty and lightly esteemed, the herald of God's Glad Tidings occupies a

position far higher than the highest that the world can give.

But the Holy Spirit works in the believer's heart a yet higher form of gratitude.   
**The chief cause for gratitude.** The Christian rejoices in the salvation of souls because of the glory which comes to God.

We have already seen that we are chosen of God "to the praise of his glory." That is the chief end of our adoption, the glory of God. That, too, is the chief end and aim of our life as His chosen ones. We delight in that more than in our personal gain and pleasure. When, therefore, God's glory is promoted we are glad and grateful. Every conversion exalts and glorifies divine love and grace. It honors God. It redounds to His praise. We rejoice in the glory which comes to Him and thank Him for securing it. This is the feeling of every chosen one as to his own adoption and that of others. It is something which makes God glorious before the universe. This was Isaiah's gratitude when he cried, "Sing, O ye heavens; for the Lord hath done it; shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein; for the Lord hath

redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel." Here the prophet is grateful because Jacob is redeemed and because in Jacob's redemption God has glorified Himself. Such a gratitude might be feebly illustrated by the feeling of a child toward an earthly father. The family is in distressing straits. The father by some heroic effort, displaying marked self-sacrifice, patience, and resolution, rescues them and establishes the home in peace and happiness. The younger children think, perhaps, only of restored comfort. They are grateful in their way. But the eldest son sees the honor of his father vindicated and increased. He values most of all the esteem in which his father is held because of his noble conduct. He rejoices in his father's glory more than in personal gain.

Unquestionably this will be no small part of the joy of heaven, that God's chosen ones will behold His glory and praise <sup>The grateful joy of heaven.</sup> Him for it. Of the miracle at Cana

we read, "This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory." In one of his writings Hazlitt tells us of a visit which he made to a picture of the marriage at Cana by Paul Veronese. "When I saw

John 2.11.

it," he says, "it covered one side of a large room in the Louvre, and it seemed to me as if that side of the apartment were thrown open and you looked out at the open sky, at buildings, marble pillars, galleries with people in them, slaves, musicians, tables loaded with viands, a sparkling, overwhelming confusion. The only fault you could find with it was there was no miracle going on in the face of the spectators." A fault, indeed, that our Lord should be manifesting forth his glory and that there should be no responsive sympathy in the faces of his friends. It is not always so. God's goodness is reflected from the countenances of His elect. On many a face is the look of grateful joy which tells of the reverent awe and thanksgiving of the heart.

Gratitude is a grace which the chosen one **Why cherish gratitude?** should diligently cultivate. He is not to await its coming but is to sue for it at the throne of grace and to cultivate it by appropriate effort.

God wants our gratitude. That is a remarkable expression of our Lord where He **a. God wants it.** assures the woman of Samaria that God "seeks" true worshipers. Think of God going out in quest of acceptable worship! God

seeks our praise. It is our privilege to turn our thoughts away from our sins and our failings, our wants and our pleasures, and to contemplate the riches of God's grace toward us and toward His chosen ones. A cheerful gratitude is our duty. We owe it to God.

Then, too, gratitude makes the Christian strong. "The joy of the Lord is your <sup>b. It makes</sup> strength." It tends to make us less <sup>us</sup> strong. selfish and unselfishness is power. It reinforces our faith and so equips us for service. It turns our thoughts outward and upward and so fortifies us against temptation. Satan delights to find Elijah under the juniper tree. There the prophet is at his worst. The grateful Christian is so much more efficient as a servant of God, so much healthier in religious life, so much richer in all spiritual experience, that we do well to cultivate gratitude and to pray for it as one of the "best gifts."

Finally, gratitude is attractive and influential. It brightens and freshens the be- <sup>c. Draws be-</sup> liever. It disposes him to cheerfulness and charitableness. It allures <sup>holders to</sup> Christ. the world to his religion. Piety is sweetened and beautified by gratitude. Very manifest is

Neh. 8:10.

this in the apostle Paul. Who can tell how much his spirit of thankfulness added to his influence? His songs of praise opened prison doors, not only to himself but to his fellow-prisoners. Every one can understand cheerfulness. A radiant religion is a light in a dark world. Gratitude shines. It is more than a sanguine temperament. It attracts attention and is winsome. It conquers unbelief and draws men to Him who is its source.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

### WITNESSING TO CHRIST.

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When any truth becomes central and vital there comes the desire to utter it. —*Richard S. Storrs D. D.*

The hackneyed objection that it is presumption for any one to say that he is a child of God takes too much for granted. It never is presumption to acknowledge what you are. If a man has not been delivered from the dominion of sin, and adopted in to the family of God, for him to say that such is the case is presumption; but if he has, then not to praise his Redeemer for it would be ingratitude.

—*William Arthur.*

No matter how tall the minaret, the mullah preaches only what he knows. —*Turkish Proverb.*

The believer who knows what it is to be chosen of God understands what is meant by a confession of Christ. He also sees why Christ commanded him to make this confession, and it becomes a delight to him to testify of the goodness of God in his salvation.

The meaning  
of Christian  
confession.

If our hope of salvation rests upon our choice of Christ our “profession of religion” is chiefly the announcement of a decision which we have

made. If we believe that Christ chose us because He foresaw that we would choose Him, or because of some fitness for discipleship in us, our profession is mingled with self-righteousness. Many Christians are disturbed by the criticisms of the world upon their religious pretensions because they do not realize that they are in the fold solely through the unmerited and unaccountable grace of God. The world charges them with professing to be better than others. This charge they cannot answer because they think of the Christian life as their own undertaking, begun by their own act, and sustained with God's assistance by their own effort. Still others who have been born again hesitate to confess Christ because they think that such a confession implies that they consider themselves good enough to be saved.

Let us turn to the Scriptures. Our Savior says, "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." Two facts are noticeable. One is the use of the word "confess." We sometimes speak of a Christian "profession," "a profession of faith," and in former days Christians were

Mat. 10:32.

The Biblical  
idea of con-  
fession.

called "professors." But "profession" has come to suggest self-assertion if not pretense. Confession is the better word. It is more humble and has not fallen into disrepute. The other fact is that we confess Christ himself. We acknowledge a Redeemer. Our confession exalts Him. We do not so much avow anything concerning ourselves as we declare that He is Lord and Master. When the believer comes forward publicly to take upon himself Christian vows he does indeed proclaim his own hope and faith, but the chief purpose of this act is to set forth Christ as worthy of all honor and glory, and to hide behind Him. This purpose takes from confession all appearance of self-confidence. It is not a profession of self but a confession of Christ. Its object is not to bring the believer into notice but to glorify the saving grace of God.

Paul presents this truth in the same way. "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus." Nowhere in his writings does he claim anything for himself in his confession of faith. It is all Christ and the Glory of Christ. As for himself he is the chief of sinners. It is the world that

Rom. 10:9.

What Paul says.

professes to be good. The Christian professes to be sinful. It is the unbeliever, not the child of God, who declares that he has "done as well as he could," and is as good as others. The chosen one renounces all claims to goodness and confesses his need of Christ. He virtually says, "I know that I am not secure in my own strength, I therefore lay hold on divine grace." This he says in view of all the resources of God for human salvation. A soldier on the rock of Gibraltar, behind the walls of its fortress, is not conceited in feeling safe. The redeemed soul is secure on the Rock of Ages. Its hope is not spiritual pride.

What then is it to confess Christ? It is simply to testify to a fact. That fact is the one which forms the central thought of this book.

**Confession of Christ is simply witness bearing.** It is the fact of the believer's adoption into the family of God. He stands up to declare what God has

Acts 1:8.

done for his soul. "Ye shall be witnesses unto me," said the Savior. The believer confessing his Lord is a witness telling what has taken place. This is the Biblical teaching as to confession of Christ. Observe the significance and the value of such witness bearing.

In the first place, the believer is qualified to make such a confession. If the act were a claim to superior knowledge of truth, or an avowal of personal worth, the Christian might hesitate.

Such con-  
fession  
trust-  
worthy.

But all that he does is to testify as to what has taken place within him. This he is competent to do. If he knows anything he knows his own spiritual experiences. He is like the blind man who said, "One thing I know." This is not boasting, it is humility. The Christian of humblest attainments need not hesitate to acknowledge God's goodness and grace. If the Christian life consisted in a series of holy deeds few could lay claim to it. But if it is a divine gift—God's work in the human soul, bestowed by the good pleasure of His will, and carried on by Him to His own Glory—the most unworthy recipient may tell the world that he has it.

John 9:25;  
6:58.  
2 Tim. 1:12

Again, Christian confession is the best defense of Christianity. The world will listen to facts when they are deaf to reason. Paul begins his speech to the angry mob, "Men, brethren, and fathers, hear ye my defence." What is his defence? Here is the acutest reasoner, the profoundest theologian

Persuasive  
power of  
Christian  
testimony.

Acts 22:1.

of the church, about to defend Christianity as represented in his own person. Now we shall have the most masterly doctrinal debate of the ages. Paul is about to prove the Gospel true. Let us prepare for most learned arguments. Nothing of the kind. He goes on to say—I was on the road to Damascus, and I saw a great light. Testimony to a fact. Confession of Christ. That is the best that Christianity has to say. That is her “defence,”—witness bearing. Some brother rises in the church to say,—I was in trouble and darkness. I was a great sinner and could not save myself. Suddenly I was blinded by a great light, and heard a wondrous voice, and I was taken by the hand and led to him whom I had persecuted, and he opened my eyes, and now I have comfort and peace. Enough—you have said everything, brother. All the philosophers in the world cannot answer that. You have uttered the strongest argument ever offered for Christianity, the statement of incontestable fact. This is the startling thought,—Christian confession is the defence of the Christian religion. The Gospel does not challenge the world to a battle of words. It takes its stand by redeemed men and women and

says,—Here is my work; listen to their recital. And so long as believers testify to the facts of spiritual experience Christianity cannot be overthrown.

It follows that it is the duty of every chosen one to publicly confess his Savior. It is not a difficult thing to do. Nothing is easier than to tell facts. The believer is not required to be a learned expounder of truth, nor a subtle reasoner. He is invited to be something better, Christ's witness. Confession  
an obligation  
and a privilege.

He has only to relate his experience. He has merely to say—I have tasted and the Lord is good. Mark the change in the patriarch Job. At first long and weary discussion, appeals to reason, issuing in nothing. Then after God revealed Himself, simple confession, “I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee.” Such a confession every believer owes to God. If the Savior has done much for him gratitude should prompt him to declare it. He should wait only long enough to be reasonably sure of his calling. No man, no church should hold him back, however young, however imperfect, if he wishes to unite with the people of God. Job 42:5. 1 Tim. 4:12.

The believer owes it to himself to confess Christ. Secret discipleship is weak discipleship. The Christian will not grow in grace who neglects to confess his Lord. Open avowal of his standing

**No growth without Confession.** will strengthen and refresh him. He will escape many temptations and better resist those which come. There is no promise in the Word to the secret disciple. On the contrary Christ is severe on those who are ashamed of Him. Let not

Mk. 8:38.

the young Christian wait for perfection. One indispensable step toward perfection is open confession of Christ. Give expression to the hope and love within. A blessing will come in return. We do not have to wait for the great reward of hearing Christ confess us before the Father and His angels. The reward comes now in the very act of confession, the reward of Christ's approval and grace for grace. The believer owes it to others to confess Christ. He owes it to his fellow Christians. They are refreshed and comforted by his testimony. They are cheered and stimulated by every new addition to the church of Christ. And he owes it to the great world lying in sin. God saves men by means of other men who have been saved. The mission

of the believer is like that of the woman of Samaria, who left her water-pot and went to the villagers to tell them of the Messiah. It is thus that God has again and again saved sinners. We do not stand alone in our experiences. We bear witness to the truth as it has come to our hearts. It is the same truth as that given in the Bible by inspiration, but preached from the volume of personal experience it finds its way with great power to human hearts. Do not underestimate the value of such testimony. You are a very imperfect disciple but your confession of Christ's power may convince other souls of the true value of salvation. Patients do not ask for the medical theories of a physician, but whether he has cured anybody. The reasonableness of the Gospel may be presented powerfully from the pulpit, but if men are to be convinced the pew must make confession of Christ's saving power.

We see now the meaning of the apostle when he says that in partaking of the Lord's Supper we "do shew the Lord's death till he come."

Such communion is one way of confessing Christ. The Bible declares that if

Confession of  
Christ at the  
communion  
table.

<sup>1</sup> Cor 11:26:  
27.

we eat and drink unworthily we suffer condemnation. Yet the believer dares to eat and drink. He does not so because he thinks that he is more worthy than others. But he comes because he knows that God has chosen him. He comes in the worthiness of Christ, confessing Christ as his atonement, confessing himself a sinner lost but for the sacrifice which he commemorates. Thus he comes. Thus he may come in his need—come at Christ's invitation to the feast which Christ has spread.

## CHAPTER XV.

### HUMILITY.

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Humble we must be, if to heaven we go ;  
High is the roof there, but the gate is low;  
Whene'er thou speakest, look with lowly eye,  
Grace is increased by humility.

—*Robert Herrick.*

Apart from the vine stock the branch is nothing and can yield nothing. Our whole life, character, and service depend on vital union with Christ. What a lesson in humility! So dependent are we upon Christ that everything in us that has any attraction or power or value is not our own but His. The whole beauty and fertility of the branch is really that of the vine. —*A. T. Pierson.*

But for the grace of God there goes John Bradford.  
—*John Bradford.*

Why me, Lord, why me? —*Whitefield.*

In the course of a long life I have observed that when people are getting religion they are full of self-abasement, and are ever ready to condemn themselves; but when they are losing it, or have lost it, they are often full of self-confidence, and find their pleasure in censuring and condemning other persons. —*Newton.*

I see no fault committed which I too might not have committed. —*Goethe.*

I do not know what the heart of a villain may be. I only know that of a virtuous man and that is frightful.

*Count de Maistre.*

In a deep growing sense of the evil of sin; in deeper humility; in lower views of self; in more entire dependence on Christ for righteousness and on the Holy Spirit for the work of grace; in feelings that fill us with pain and regret and godly sorrow, and that make us eat our passover with bitter herbs—the work of sanctification may be going on.

—Guthrie.

Few speak of humility humbly.

—Pascal.

Humbly to conceal humility, and to shun the praise of being humble.

—*Motto of Ignatius Loyola.*

Oh, gift of gifts! Oh, grace of faith!

My God! how can it be  
That thou, who hast discerning love,  
Should'st give that gift to me?

—Faber.

With the hope of ultimate acceptance with God I have enjoyed much cheerfulness before men; but I have at the same time labored incessantly to cultivate the deepest humility before God. I have never thought that the circumstance of God having forgiven me was any reason why I should forgive myself; on the contrary, I have always judged it better to loathe myself the more in proportion as I was assured that God was pacified toward me. (Ezek. 16:63.) Nor have I been satisfied with viewing my sins as men view the stars on a cloudy night, one here, and another there, with great intervals between them; but have endeavored to get and to preserve continually before my eyes, such a view of them as we have of the stars in the brightest night: the greater and the smaller all intermingled, and forming as it were one continuous mass.

—Rev. Charles Simeon.

The consciousness of being chosen of God  
 God's condescension in choosing some to salvation produces a genuine and healthy humility. For this reason, if for no other, the believer should meditate much upon the exceeding riches of grace manifested in his calling. For humility is an

elusive and treacherous virtue. The moment one thinks of it he is apt to lose it. If one tries to cherish it he may fall into a morbid and unreal feeling. But the humility which comes of high honors bestowed, the sense of unworthiness which accompanies the joy of receiving spiritual gifts from God, is so free from the dross of self and withal so grateful, so leavened with bold confidence and so little in danger from excess, that were it only to gain such a virtue we might well think often of our adoption into the family of God.

True, this is not the only avenue by which humility comes to the heart of the Christian. A just sense of one's sinfulness, <sup>Conscience</sup> such as David shows in the fifty-first Psalm makes one humble. It is our <sup>prompts to lowliness of mind.</sup> undoubted duty to scrutinize ourselves carefully that we may "understand our errors." There <sup>Ps. 19:12.</sup> is some danger of discouragement in this course, and of falling into a joyless state of soul which is not to the glory of God. We are not to forget that where sin abounds grace much more abounds. The Christian must not be forever playing the policeman upon himself, and finding a melancholy satisfaction in taking himself

into custody for real or fancied misdemeanors. Humility is unhealthy if it is associated with constant depression of spirits.

Again, humility is sometimes fostered by the comparison of ourselves with other Christians of *Observation of the attainments of other Christians.* higher attainments. Thomas A'Kem- pis says, "Do not think that thou hast made any progress toward per- fection till thou feelest that thou art less than the least of all human beings." Within bounds this method may be adopted. It is well to measure ourselves against greater men if only to check pride. George Whitefield was sincere when he depreciated his own worth as compared with that of Wesley. "Do you expect to see John Wesley in heaven?" he was asked. "No, I do not expect to see him there." "Why not?" "Because John Wesley will be so near the throne, and I shall be so far from it, that I can have no hope of seeing John Wesley in heaven." This was at the time of the transient alienation of these two friends. Such an example we may emulate. Just here comes in the advantage of reading Christian biography. The danger to be guarded against is again that of morbid self-distrust and disheartenment.

If on the other hand we compare ourselves with the worst of men we are moved not to pride but to humility. John Bradford was made humble at sight of a drunken murderer being led on the street to prison. Thus we may reflect on what we might have been but for God's grace, and upon the possibilities of evil which are yet within and before us. Birth, circumstances, education, the good providence of God, have defended us against great iniquities. Of some temptations we know nothing. We are "only good from lack of test." Some one says, "there is a devil in every saint." When we are surest that we stand we most need to take heed lest we fall. However vile our fellow man, it is salutary for us to remind ourselves that not our goodness but God's grace has saved us from being as vile.

But for  
God's grace  
we might  
have sinned  
hopelessly.

But there is a better way than any of these for learning humility. It is by reflected upon our adoption in Christ. A more excellent way.

In the first place we note that our Savior reminded his followers of their adoption for the purpose of making them humble. He had just called them friends, assuring them that he

John 15:15.

a. The way  
by which  
the Savior  
led his  
disciples.

John 15:16.

had made known to them the secrets of heaven. "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you." But it was for just such favors that they had been contending. He saw their rising pride. He must make them humble and yet not undo the inspiring effect of the words just spoken. And so he adds, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you," and reminds them that the servant is not greater than his lord. Thus he leaves them all the honor of being friends but takes away all ground for their boasting. He so presents the honor that humility must blend with their gratitude. They cannot be proud for they have not chosen him: they cannot be disheartened for he has chosen them.

That the disciples learned the lesson is plain from their subsequent lives and from the strain

b. The hu-  
mility of the  
apostles.

of humility which always blends with the note of exultation in their writings. Thus Peter in the opening of his first epistle addresses the "elect according to the foreknowledge of God." He sets before them the glory of their high calling. At the same time he exhorts them to sobriety of mind

and connects humility on their part with exaltation from God. The spirit of James's epistle is the same. Immediately after assuring his readers that "of his own will begat he us with the word of truth," he appends the corollary that they are to "receive with meekness the engrafted word." He warns them against a boastful faith, and in almost the very words which Peter uses presses the duty of humility. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." When John breaks forth into a paeon of praise over the love which the Father hath bestowed upon us it is difficult to say whether the uppermost feeling is humility or exultation. Everywhere in Paul's writings does the thought of his rich inheritance in Christ awaken a sense of unworthiness. By nature he was a proud, self-sufficient man. His pride was conquered more by the loving kindness than by the righteous judgments of God. And when he urges "the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse" to "put on therefore as the elect of God, holy and beloved, humbleness of mind," he illustrates the close connection between the sense of adoption and the grace of humility. What Chris-

I Pet. Ch. 1.  
Rom. 5:6.  
Jas. 1:18, 21.

Jas. 4:10.

Colos. 3:12.

tian, contemplating the grace which has reached down and saved him in his guilt, can be anything but humble? Yet such humility is in little danger from those temptations which often beset this virtue. Boasting is excluded by the sense of unworthiness, and discouragement is forbidden by the consciousness of almighty grace within. It is a joyous, grateful humility, a virile Christian virtue, emptied of self and filled with Christ.

This virtue, springing from a sense of being chosen of God, will show itself in a certain modesty of mind before the mysteries of Biblical truth. We do not mean that **Humility to-  
ward re-  
vealed  
truth.** spurious form of intellectual humility which, on the plea of not being wise above that which is written, rejects those truths of revelation which are either above reason or are not agreeable to the carnal mind. There is a genteel agnosticism abroad, masquerading in the garb of intellectual modesty, which is simply the pride of disbelief. With this the true Christian has nothing to do. Things revealed belong unto us and to our children forever. But the child of God in the fact of his adoption has come face to face with one of the mysteries of

divine grace. This fact is as certain as any fact of consciousness can be. The explanation of it he cannot fathom. Before such unsearchable judgments of God he is silent and humble. He has learned that human reason is not the measure of divine truth. Because he cannot understand a doctrine will no longer be a reason for his doubting it. He cannot understand his own redemption yet knows that he is redeemed. Hence forth he will search the Scriptures to learn what God has made known, and will not lean to his own understanding. Thus he will gain loyalty of intellect to the truth of God, which is as much his duty as loyalty of will to the commandment of God.

Christian humility, springing from the experience of adoption, will bear fruit in Christian living. Augustine, upon being asked, What is the first grace of the Christian character? replied, Humility. And the second? Humility. And the third? And still Augustine replied, Humility. Right—responded the questioner, for without it we cannot receive any other grace of God.

Humility  
leavens the  
whole  
character.

The root of sin is selfishness. And what is selfishness? At bottom selfishness is an undue sense of one's own worth and deserts. Checking this evil feeling humility forbids the believer to exalt himself above his fellows. Thus humility strikes at the root of sin. In so doing it is a powerful preventive of strife and dissension in the church. Conscious of how much he has been forgiven by God the chosen one will readily forgive what little injuries he may receive from his fellow men. Humility will soften his judgments sweeten his manners, and purify his prayers. The humblest Christians are the strongest Christians in the face of opposition and in the day of trial. The martyrs were the humblest and the bravest of men; also the happiest. The truly humble disciple will attract men by virtues of which he himself is hardly conscious, and of which he does not wish to speak. Some one asked Dr. Lothrop how much religion he had. "Not much *to speak of*," was his significant reply. Humility and joy are closely allied. Happiness comes to the lowly spirit. While spiritual pride is a foe to Christian usefulness, a just sense of the divine

condescension increases the workman's effectiveness in the service of God. In short true humility beautifies every other Christian grace and invigorates the whole character.

## CHAPTER XVI.

### SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

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He must have a long spoon who would sup with the devil.

*—Old Proverb.*

Our prayers often resemble the mischievous tricks of town children who knock at their neighbor's house and then run away. We often knock at heaven's door and then run off into the spirit of the world.

*—Welsh Preacher.*

Let us use worldly things as wise pilgrims do their staves and other necessaries convenient for their journey. So long as they help us forward in our way, let us make use of them and accordingly esteem them. But if they become troublesome hinderances and cumbersome burdens, let us leave them behind us or cast them away.

*—Downname.*

All the water is waste that runs beside the mill; so all thy thoughts and words are waste which are not to the glory of God. A bee will not sit on a flower where no honey can be sucked; neither should the Christian engage in anything but for his soul's good and God's honor.

*—Gurnal.*

A Christian is like Jacob's ladder: while his body, that lower part, stands on the ground, the top, his higher and better part, is in heaven.

*—Adams.*

An aged minister, disturbed by the worldliness of his people, declared his intention of

preaching them a sermon to prove that they had souls. Such a discourse might be timely in many a church. The steady pressure of the world upon the Christian sometimes makes him forget his high calling. This temptation is vividly portrayed in the Song of Solomon. The central thought of that drama is that the world is continually soliciting the church from her Lord. Here is the earthly king in all his splendor seeking to allure the Shulamite maiden from her absent shepherd lover. So the church waits the return of her Beloved and while he delays his coming, an earthly Solomon, in the pride and pomp of wealth and learning, solicits her affections. The chosen one must recognize this peril. It is difficult to mark the exact point at which unfaithfulness to Christ begins. That point is in the heart out of sight. The world persuades him to share its prosperity, its enjoyments, and he begins to lose his devotion to Christ. The silent pressure of unbelief, the antagonism of the world to the humbling doctrines of grace, pervade his thinking like a malarial atmosphere, and impair the vigor and the purity of his faith. He lives in a

The greatest  
danger of the  
Christian.

world whose spirit is selfish and irreligious and he comes into close contact, and even into affectionate relationship, with people who think lightly of sin and care nothing for his Redeemer. Insensibly he may be secularized. The repeated jars of a heavy train passing over a bridge are equal in the aggregate to one mighty blow. Few Christians surrender to the world at a single stroke. It is the insidious influences, daily repeated, which gradually weaken and shatter devotion. Then come works and ceremonies, activity of the hands without zeal of the heart, all the formalities of religion without its inward fire and force.

The Christian should therefore think much of his adoption into God's family. **Adoption involves separation.** He is chosen from something to something. How earnestly God impressed this fact upon Israel. "I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people." "For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth." And the sign and evidence of this separation was that God was with them as He was not with the

Levit. 20:24.

Deut. 14:2.

nations. "For wherein shall it be known here that I and thy people have found grace in thy sight? is it not in that thou goest with us? so shall we be separated, I and thy people, from all the people that are upon the face of the earth." Adopted therefore separated. The child of God is taken away from his old life, which is the life of the world, and ushered into a life utterly new.

Exod. 33:16.

Turning to the words of Christ we find Him repeatedly speaking of the world as hostile to Himself and to His followers. His kingdom is not of this world, and the world hates Him. He has chosen them out of the world. Though they are in the world they are not of the world as He is not of the world. He came to do the Father's will whereas the world is bent on doing its own will. The only possible result was the Cross. It is so to-day. Christ is immensely popular in the idea. Art and Literature do Him homage. But the real Christ is crucified every day. In the Bible the church is warned not against the opposition of the world but against its friendship. "The friendship of the world is enmity with God. Whosoever therefore will

Enmity be-  
tween Christ  
and the  
World.

John 18:36:  
15:18,19;  
17:16.

James 4:4.

be a friend of the world is the enemy of God.” We do not need to soften these words of James. Worldliness is as deadly a foe to piety as when the Gospel first grappled with the lust and vice of the early centuries. It is an evil day when

Acts 19:25.

our Christianity no longer offends men, when the music of Demetrius’s opposition is no longer heard. The Christian family is “a chosen

1 Pet. 2:9.

generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” No polish of culture, no amiability of temper, no exactness of morality, no zeal in philanthropy, can bridge the gulf which separates the spiritual life of the true child of God from the death which characterizes the best earthly virtues. Therefore the believer

2 Cor.  
6:14-18.

should come out and be separate. He has been consecrated, set apart. Like his Great High

Heb. 7:26.

Priest he is to be “holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners.” He should become this in no pride of heart, but in most humble and grateful remembrance of God’s condescension and mercy in calling him from darkness into light.

What is separation from the world? Not alienation from all persons who are in the world. Christianity should inspire within us

that same love of man which was in Christ. And the more truly we are separate from the world the more desirous shall we be of the world's redemption.

Unworldliness not indifference toward mankind.

This fact is illustrated in the lives of many devoted missionaries while worldly Christians care little for the salvation of men.

Separation from the world is first of all a difference in the temper and spirit of life from the worldly temper and spirit. The Christian seeks the glory of God while the world seeks the gratification of self. The child of God delights in spiritual things: the world delights in the pleasures of sense. The will of Christ is supreme in the life of the chosen one, the will of the flesh in the life of the world. The ambition of the servant of Christ is to grow in grace, and to do the Master's work; the world's ambition is to amass wealth or learning, to win honor or power, to enjoy life. The world wishes to be ministered unto and looks at things temporal; the heir of glory desires to minister and looks at things unseen and eternal. The world settles itself down into the present brief age, making no provision for the life beyond; the chosen one

But spirituality of purpose and feeling.

**Heb. 11:16.** has the pilgrim spirit, does not fix himself firmly into the environment of to-day, "desiring a better country, that is an heavenly." All attempts to accommodate the worldly and the Christian spirit to each other must fail. They are naturally antagonistic. Some Christians try to establish an agreeable alliance or truce between the two, but worldliness cannot be sanctified and spirituality is inevitably chilled by compromise with the world.

And this leads to the thought that separation **And loyalty** from the world is a difference from **to truth and** the world in standards of faith and **righteousness.** practice. The world gets its religious belief from its prejudices, passions, and unaided reason. It gets its standards of rights from an unenlightened conscience and from considerations of expediency, personal profit, and public advantage. The Christian looks to the Word of God for truth, and to the will of God for rules of practice. So far as Christianity is pure it cannot be attractive to the world. It has come to turn the world upside down. It is a fatal although a frequent mistake to attempt to win the world by letting Christianity down to its level in order to conciliate its favor. We

may dovetail a worldly life on to a Christian profession but God is not mocked and man is not persuaded. Compromise will never win men to Christ. Compromise is the fugitive in the Siberian forest driving furiously to escape the hungry wolves and at intervals throwing out its children hoping to appease its ferocious pursuers. You can never give the world enough till it has you. You may throw out your principles one by one; there will be but a momentary diversion and the wolves will be on your track fiercer than ever. Satan makes no more plausible lie than that the church can win the world by falling in with worldly standards and habits and by accommodating truth to worldly opinions. If your lot is cast in a worldly home, live a devoted life. In society be earnest in the midst of frivolity, simple and hearty in faith before prevailing belief. On the street do business to the glory of God. In an unspiritual church be one of a few to live near to Christ. "Even in Sardis!" A few names even in Sardis, a scattering of Alpine flowers amid ice and snow, a few pure lilies springing from the mire,—"these are mine," says the Savior, "mine even in Sardis." Such is

Rev. 3:4.

our Lord's loving recognition of those who keep themselves unspotted from the world.

Our duty and our privilege consist not so much in separating ourselves from the world as in keeping near to Christ.

*And near-  
ness to  
Christ.* Instinctively we draw away from earthly ambitions, amusements, and aims as we find our delight in spiritual things. The prodigal son did not say "I will tear myself away from the swine," but "I will arise and go to my father." He longed for the old home. So soon as he hungered for his father's bread it needed no effort for him to abandon husks. All that the chosen one has to do is to enter upon full possession of his rights as an heir of grace. Then he will not cling to the world. Separation from the world will not be difficult. It is said that the earth never comes between the planet Venus and the sun. Therefore that planet always shines, it is never eclipsed. We have only to keep in the light and the world will swing in so distant an orbit that its shadow will not be cast upon us.

Let the Christian be fully persuaded that separation from the world is power over the world. Unconverted men despise a worldly religion.

A nominally Christian life conforming to earthly standards and practices encourages unbelievers to continue in sin. They argue that their lives are as good as the Christian's. Do not fear to repel men from Christianity by coming out from the world and being separate. The Christian's influence for good is multiplied as he makes the impression on men that his life is a new life, not of this world, something far better than anything which the world can produce. Contrast, difference, separation,—there is our hope. One life pitched in the right key gives the note for all discordant lives within its reach. How marked are some of the Biblical proofs of this fact. For example we read in the sixth of Acts, "They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost," and then as a result, "The number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly." Again in a single verse we read of Barnabas, "For he was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord." There is seen to be in these cases of Stephen and Barnabas a close connection between separateness from the world and

The victory  
that over-  
cometh the  
world.

Inspired ex-  
amples.

Acts 6:5,7.

Acts 11:24.

the power to win souls. It is the same with every disciple who has been successful in leading souls to Christ. Do not be over anxious to make Christianity attractive. The influence of the Christian will be felt for good in proportion as he makes on man the impression which Christ made that he is not of this world, that his life is separate from theirs, separate in its motives, separate in its aims, separate in its rewards. If he gives them the impression that he lives for the same ends which they eagerly pursue, that what satisfies them satisfies him, that his standard of right is no higher than theirs—if his manner of life and of speech gives them no uneasiness of conscience, so that they never feel rebuked by his example, he is not the kind of disciple whom the Master described when he said, “They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.” But if he is manifestly unlike worldly people, if he seems to have meat to eat which the world knows not of, if his aim is clearly not to persuade men to like him but to win them to Christ, his whole life will be a most eloquent plea for the religion which he professes and for the Master whom he serves.

Jenny Lind was a sincere Christian. She

once expressed a resolve to retire from the stage on the ground that the pursuit hindered her devotion to higher things. "But you owe your work to the world," pleaded a friend. "Yet when that work,"

said the great singer gravely, "makes me care little for this," pointing to her Bible, "it is time to give it up." The world interferes with the Christian's joy and peace. Christ said, "my joy," "my peace." He distinguishes thus between worldly joy and peace and His own.

*John 15:11;  
14:27.*

The spirit of the world is unrest and dissatisfaction. He who tries to combine worldliness with Christliiness will be most uncomfortable, having too much conscience to fully enjoy the world, and too little consecration to enter into the joy and the peace of Christ. Just so far as a Christian is of the world can he be disturbed by the world. The world has something which he wants, something essential to his peace. He cares for what the world can give and for what it can withhold. Christ said, "I have overcome the world." This placed Him above the power of trouble, persecution, death. The toys and baubles of the world He despised. The Golden Rule He practised. The great temptation which

*John 16:33.*

comes to every soul He met and vanquished when Satan offered Him the whole world for a moment's homage. Thenceforth the world could not annoy Him, nor molest His peace and joy. His life was not happy as men count happiness. It was dreadfully out of fashion. Outwardly it was a storm. Yet to this most unworldly and troubled life we go for our perfect illustration of inward blessedness. Verily he that loseth his life saves it.

That there are Christians who have fully attained to a complete separation from sin we have their own testimony. It is Dr. A. J.

**Not fully apprehended by all, but possible.** Gordon who writes, "We do consider it possible that one may experi-

ence a great crisis in his spiritual life, in which there is such a total self-surrender to God and such an infilling of the Holy Spirit, that he is freed from the bondage of sinful appetites and habits, and enabled to have constant victory over self, instead of suffering constant defeat. We doubt not that there are Christians who have yielded themselves to God in such absolute surrender, and who through the upholding power of the Spirit have been so kept in that condition of surrender that sin has not had do-

minion over them." Such testimony we have no reason to question. Its validity has already been pointed out in the chapter upon the Baptism of the Holy Spirit.

Other disciples must not be disheartened if with Paul they are compelled to acknowledge that they have not yet fully apprehended that for which Christ laid hold of them. A prisoner sits in his cell. The jailer comes with a pardon and opens the door. The prisoner steps out. He is a free man. He is saved. That is Justification. But is he fully saved? He must work out his salvation with fear and trembling. He must grow into good citizenship and all the virtues. That is Sanctification. But may he not be instantaneously sanctified? How can we doubt it? How can we limit the power of God? Meanwhile we will rejoice in all who are "faint, yet pursuing." Thank God for one Christian in the church whose heart glows with joy and peace. We will not lament over the many, we will rejoice over the few. If God will send us two disciples who have held companionship with Jesus, and who can testify, "Did not our heart burn within us, while He talked with us by the way?" we will praise the divine grace

Phil. 3:12  
13.

Lk. 24:32.

which has given to the church this blessing. These are the men we want, men with burning hearts. Do not fear the atheist; fear the worldly man in the church. Do not exult over large statistics on the church book; exult over the few names, the little band of devoted followers of Christ. Purity in Sardis means much. Sardis is a hard place in which to keep unspotted from the world. But even there Christ has His faithful ones. "They are worthy." O, to hear Christ say that of us! "They shall walk with me in white." For such a reward one might leave all and follow Christ.

## CHAPTER XVII.

### HOLY LIVING.

---

The great touchstone of truth is its tendency to produce holiness. —*Samuel Harris.*

How much the more thou knowest, and how much the better thou understandest, so much the more grievously shalt thou therefore be judged, unless thy life also be most holy. —*Thomas A'Kempis.*

He wills that I should holy be.

What can resist that will?

The counsel of his grace in me,

He surely will fulfill.

—*Charles Wesley.*

I want to give my witness that for fifty-two years I have been blessed so to walk with God as never consciously to bring reproach upon the name of Jesus.

—*George Muller.*

We believe that we, who are by nature the servants of sin, when this same faith intervenes, are regenerated unto a new life. But by this faith we receive the grace of living holily, while we embrace that Gospel promise, that the Lord will give us the Holy Spirit. Faith is, then, so far from extinguishing the zeal for living well and holily, that it rather weakens and influences that zeal in us; whence good works do necessarily proceed.

—*Confession of the French Protestant Church, 1561.*

My mother's habit was every day, immediately after breakfast, to withdraw for an hour to her own room, and to spend that hour in reading the Bible, in meditation and prayer. From that hour, as from a pure fountain,

she drew the strength and sweetness which enabled her to fulfill all her duties, and to remain unruffled by the worries and pettinesses which are so often the trial of narrow neighborhoods. As I think of her life, and all it had to bear, I see the absolute triumph of Christian grace in the lovely ideal of a Christian lady. I never saw her temper disturbed; I never heard her speak one word of anger, of calumny, or of idle gossip; I never observed in her any sign of a single sentiment unbecoming to a soul which had drunk of the river of the water of life, and which had fed upon manna in the barren wilderness.

—*Farrar.*

There is a sense in which a man is to have no will of his own, but there is also a sense in which he is to be all will. He is to do God's will with all the power of his own will.

—*Augustus H. Strong.*

Holiness—as I then wrote down some of my contemplations on it—appeared to me to be of a sweet, calm, pleasant, charming, serene nature, which brought an inexpressible purity, brightness, peacefulness, ravishment to the soul; in other words, that it made the soul like a field or garden of God, with all manner of pleasant fruits and flowers, all delightful and undisturbed, enjoying a sweet calm and the gentle vivifying beams of the sun.

—*Jonathan Edwards.*

It has been strikingly pointed out that Barnabas, who was said to be "a good man and full of the Holy Ghost," was a native of Cyprus, so famous for its wickedness that the very name "Cyprian" is still a synonym of impurity. As the fairest flowers sometimes spring from the blackest ooze so some of the most eminent of God's servants are drawn from the darkest places of iniquity. God exalts His electing grace and illustrates the power of the Gospel by making

the brightest saint out of the foulest sinner. And every Christian is appointed to this end. Election is not so much a choice to exclusive favor as a choice to a special service.

God needs human agents, witnesses, The purpose  
of God in  
election. living epistles to be known and read

of all men. Accordingly He chooses some in whom His grace shall be manifested and through whom His kingdom shall be advanced. Thus Paul tells the Romans that they are “called to be saints,” examples of holy living. He declares to the Ephesians that they have been chosen to be “holy and without blame before him in love,” and again that they were “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” and exhorts them “that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.” So also Peter reminds his readers that they are elected and sanctified “unto obedience,” that they are a chosen generation “that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.”

This purpose of his adoption should ever be in the mind of the Christian. In the blessed comfort of God’s favor he should never lose sight of the fact

An inspired  
definition  
of a true  
Christian.

Rom. 1:7.

Eph. 1:4; 2  
10.

Eph. 4:1.

1 Pet. 1:2;  
2:9.

that the end of his calling as a saint is God's glory and the world's edification. By a consistent life he is to "adorn the doctrine." The world says, Abandon doctrine, it is repulsive. God says, Make it beautiful and attractive, adorn it. The Christian never obeys till he is chosen and sanctified; he was never chosen and sanctified unless he obeys.

Pause for a moment over the description of a true Christian as given by Peter in the opening verses of his first epistle. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." This is a singularly complete portrait of the child of God. It begins with the fact that God has chosen him. He is "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." Here is the groundwork of the picture. Next comes the Christian's growth in grace. "Through sanctification of the Spirit." Then follows the outward manifestation of the inner life in the disciple's faithful service. "Unto obedience." And finally his eternal salvation is assured in the atoning blood of Christ. "And sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." Thus we have

the Christian's life depicted in its origin, its power, its fruits, its seal. Mark the completeness of the picture. Chosen, sanctified, obedient, sprinkled. Mark the symmetry of the description. On the one side the counsel and co-operation of the Holy Trinity. Whomsoever the Father elects, the Spirit sanctifies, and the Son redeems. On the other side the sure response of the human recipient of this grace. Chosen, sanctified, sprinkled, he will surely be obedient. This is the Spirit's own conception of the child of God. It is God's purpose to transform His chosen ones into this likeness.

Holy living is the gift of God and is secured through adoption. The Bible teaches that we are saved by grace. What is it to be saved? Primarily to be rescued, to be delivered from the penalty and the power of sin. But salvation is a large work. It covers the whole nature and life. Man is not only saved from sin, he is saved to holiness. Salvation does more for a man than to snatch him out of the fire. Christ recovers for Himself what He rescues. He does not ransom us and let us go. He ransoms us back into His own rights over us. He releases us

I. **Holy Liv-  
ing not an  
achievement  
but a be-  
stowment.**

Gal. 3:13,14.

John 17:1,2.

Rom. 14:9.

from bondage to restore us to His service. Salvation is, therefore, the fulfilment of our whole destiny as the children of God. That destiny is likeness to Christ. God takes the chosen one in hand to make him perfect and complete and fit for the companionship of heaven. Salvation is a process and salvation is a bestowment. Accordingly the inspired Word says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God." You are saved—saved from hell, saved from sin, saved unto holy living, but "not of works lest any man should boast." Your self-attained goodness does not save you. And yet if you are saved you will live a holy life. By what power? Your own? Not so—lest any man should boast. The grace which chose you will make you holy. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." The believer is God's creation, not only in conversion, but in all divine virtues and graces. He is not chosen of God and then left to achieve righteousness. He is "chosen to be a saint," and the grace which chose him will fashion him into the likeness of Christ.

Eph. 2:8.

Eph. 2:9.

Eph. 2:10.

From this it appears how unscriptural it is to speak of the believer's reliance upon electing grace as being hostile to <sup>An incentive to good works.</sup> holy living. It is sometimes said that although we are chosen we must nevertheless strive to lead right lives. This is a most lamentable anti-climax. Think of a military captain who should call forth a band of picked men to storm a fort, and after inspiring them with the thought that they are the chosen ones of the army, should add, "And yet—although you have been thus honored, you must do your duty, and obey orders, and fight well." On the contrary, he would say in substance, "Soldiers, you have been selected for this great enterprise because you are equal to it. On to victory!" Thus the Captain of our salvation, who sees the future, and who can make us conquerors, summons us to the conflict, and His call is the guarantee of our triumph. Therefore the more fully we rely on His choice of us the more complete will be His work of grace in our hearts. This fact is illustrated in the lives of the most devout of God's children in all ages. It is a singular fact that the charge which the world is ever bringing against those Christians who most

utterly cast themselves on the grace of God is not a charge of laxity in living but of over strictness. Who, for instance, were stigmatized as Puritans—purists in their conduct? The strongest advocates of efficacious grace. Where are “Puritanical” people, those who are too rigid in their morals—to be found to-day? Certainly among the devout believers in the personal call and the sustaining grace of God. The more firmly a believer is convinced that God has chosen him out of the world, the more surely will he be separate from the world and maintain a daily walk with God.

Is it objected that we shall be tempted to **An objection** lax our efforts to live holy lives if we **answered.** are confident of our election? That objection occurred to Paul. In his own person he was the best answer to the cavil, the most ardent believer in election living the holiest life. But he answered the objection. His reply is in the first half of Romans VI. What does he say? That we must not carry our faith in electing grace too far and so abuse the doctrine? Not at all. He says that the threatened catastrophe is simply impossible. A man cannot sincerely rest in the doctrine and neglect the

duties. Adoption means death to sin, and "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" In other words the chosen one has received life from God, and that inner life will surely manifest itself in holy living. A person may "continue in sin," but such sinfulness only proves that his belief in his adoption is a mistake. If one is truly chosen of God his reliance upon the grace which chose him can only give him incentive and strength to live worthy of his high calling, can only stimulate fresh reliance upon that grace for continuing in him the divine work begun.

Holy Living calls for constant vigilance and strenuous endeavor on the part of the believer. There is no contradiction between this proposition and the preceding. Paul puts the two into a sentence when he says to the Philippians, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." And this apostle who of all inspired writers exalts most highly the grace of God insists most earnestly on the responsibility of man. The believer's salvation is already ac-

II. Holy  
living calls  
for the exer-  
cise of the  
believer's  
highest  
powers.

Phil.2:12,13

complished for him yet he is to work it out. God works in him to will, moving his mind to right choices, thus securing practical obedience, and yet he is to exert his will and to strive to choose the right. God saves you—therefore strive for salvation. God gives you life—therefore take care of that life. These opposites are harmonized in daily experience. “These two mighty pillars on which all morality and all religion repose have their foundations down deep in our nature and tower up beyond our sight. They seem to stand opposite to each other, but it is only as the strong piers of some tall arch are opposed. Beneath they repose on one foundation, above they spring together in the completing keystone, and bear the whole steady structure.” Unreserved reliance upon God’s grace so far from relaxing the believer’s efforts stimulates him to strenuous endeavor in holy living.

There are several reasons for this. In the first place, faith in saving grace **a. A thankful spirit prompts to obedience.** addresses the believer’s gratitude. God has chosen him in his unworthiness and sin. Undeserved spiritual mercies have been granted him. Within him

great hopes and heavenly expectations have been awakened. He has received "beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness." His understanding has been opened to the truth as it is in Jesus. God has put a new song in his heart. Christ has called him friend. What can he do in return? He can live to the honor of his Maker. He can forsake the sin which grieves his Savior. He can do but little, yet that little will be accepted. Every blessing prompts him to live a holy life. The more utterly he surrenders himself to the thought that his salvation is all of grace the more eager and steadfast will be his service. His daily question will be, What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits toward me?

Ps. 116:12.

Again, the consciousness of being chosen unto obedience awakens the believer's sense of honor. God has named him as an heir of glory; he is bound to live as such. Thus Paul appeals to the self-respect of the Ephesians. In three burning chapters he sets forth the gracious purpose of God in calling them. Then in the first verse of the fourth chapter he comes

b. Honor-  
able dealing  
with God  
involves  
obedience.

upon them with that searching word "worthy." "Lead a worthy life. Do not dishonor such a vocation." Every Christian feels the force of this appeal. Manhood and womanhood feel it. A worldly, selfish, frivolous life dishonors the man or the woman who is chosen of God. It discredits the cause of religion. It brings reproach upon the church of Christ. It obscures the glory of Christ himself. No honorable person will claim to be a Christian and lead a worldly life.

Faith in saving grace addressess the believer's courage and self-reliance. As his assurance of

c. The  
believer's  
sense of  
security  
begets  
confidence.

personal adoption deepens his confidence in his power to obey strengthens. If chosen to bear fruit he can bear fruit. Had he chosen Christ he might doubt his ability to carry out his purpose. But Christ chose him, knowing his failings, his talents, his aptitudes. Christ chose him and ordained him to go and bring forth fruit. But Christ's judgment is infallible. Therefore the believer gains confidence. He must be able to do what God selected him to do. Thus the true source of courage and assurance in holy living is absolute faith in God's

electing grace. It is recorded of Dr. A. J. Gordon that at one time in his religious life he "gave up trying and found peace in trusting."

Once more, a vivid sense of being chosen of God stimulates the believer's ambition to fulfil God's purpose and expectation. That is a noble sentiment of Paul where he expresses his determination to apprehend that

**d. The highest aspiration stirred by faith in electing grace.**

for which he was apprehended of Christ Jesus. Phil. 3:12. The Lord had laid hold of him for a certain purpose. "Let me lay hold of that very purpose on account of which Christ Jesus laid hold of me." As if you were to apprehend a neglected boy on the street, were to lay hold of him and educate him that he might become a useful man, and he, like a young Paul, were to say, "I will not disappoint my benefactor. I will follow after, if that I may apprehend that usefulness for which I was apprehended of my friend." Christ lays hold of us that our lives may bear witness to the power of His grace. He expects great things of His chosen ones. The knowledge that He has "ordained" them to lead holy lives will spur them on to fulfil his plan. Whitefield once said, "I pray

to God this day to make me an extraordinary Christian." It is extraordinary Christians that this sinful world needs, Christians who rise above the common levels of religious experience and living. The thought that Christ has drawn the outline of our lives inspires us to fill it in. "I follow after if that I may apprehend." There is a joyous bound and spring in the very words. I am not pursuing my plan but Christ's plan for me. One step to-day, another to-morrow. And when at last I reach the end it will be enough for me to hear one word of approval, one look or sign to tell me that I have in some degree apprehended that for which He apprehended me.

The practical life is the fruit of the spiritual.

**III. Holy living attained through the strength of the inner religious life.** In Peter's picture of the Christian, above mentioned, adoption comes first, then sanctification, then obedience. "Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience." We cannot reverse this process. The Father must choose, and the Spirit must convert before the sinner can obey. "If ye love me keep my commandments." There is no true

commandment keeping which does not spring from love. God's law cannot be fulfilled by merely doing certain things. "I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts." Obedience is something which takes place in the heart. Dr. Chalmers tells us that before his conversion he was wont to press upon his people the duty of reformation of life, "but I never once heard of any such reformation having been effected among them. It was not till I took the Scriptural way of laying the method of reconciliation before them that I ever heard of any of those subordinate reformations."

Heb 8:10.

The mind must be right before the hands can do right. "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." Practice reflects belief. Conduct is but an index of what is going on within. It is the soul that obeys. The sunbeam is not the sun; behavior is not obedience. Obedience is the whole nature brought into captivity to Christ. He likened holy living to fruit, and said: "Make the tree good." Correct conduct with no righteous motive behind it, is like fair fruit tied to a dead tree.

John 6:29.

Mat. 12:33.

This appears if we take holy living in its simplest form, the doing those deeds which conscience approves. The Christian should be an example in the homely virtues. He should be conspicuously honest, patient, truthful, reliable, brave. He should pay his debts and control his temper, and put a bridle on his tongue. In business he should be upright, in benevolence he should be liberal, a kind neighbor, a sympathetic friend, a public-spirited citizen. Christianity aims to outstrip the world in the common excellencies, to meet the world on its own chosen level, and to surpass it in attainments of character which even irreligious men admire and praise. It is a reproach to any believer if worldly people excel him in integrity, generosity, brotherly kindness, self-control, or any of the ordinary elements of good character. The source of his deficiency is within. He needs the clean heart, the right spirit, for which David prayed. The fruit must be made good by making the tree good. If our lives are outwardly wrong, there is evil within. We must go to the sources of action and purify them.

Moreover the need of spiritual quickening

Ps 51:10, 12.

(b) The  
Holy Spirit  
for service.

appears when we consider Christian service as a part of holy living. Every believer is chosen of God with a view to some work in the great vineyard. Talents are "apprehended of Christ Jesus." If he is to be a "good and faithful servant," his communion with God must be maintained. Many church members are doing no work for Christ. Many are doing work which has no religion in it; "all their piety below their elbows," as Dr. Bushnell expressed it, so that "church work" has come to mean oyster suppers, pink teas, broomstick drills, and the like. Some workers take part in the labors of the church so long as they can be conspicuous and have their way. Offended by some trifles, or failing of applause, they go moodily away. On the other hand there are the good and faithful servants. They feel that the work of Christ's church is a spiritual work. They seek the good of souls. They pray in secret. They teach in the Sunday-school with a religious purpose. They are found habitually at the prayer-meeting. They make sacrifices for the kingdom of Christ. What is the difference between these two classes? A difference in spir-

itual life. Nearness to God is the secret of faithful Christian service. A great deal of church bustle and parade may be manufactured with no spirituality behind it. If the kingdom of God is to come, the members of the body of Christ must abide in Him.

But no true believer is satisfied with holy living which concerns only the conduct. Every act has a motive. Behind every deed there is a purpose. Holy living includes the secret springs of action. Motives are kept holy by nearness to God. Paul exhorts us to eat and to drink to God's glory. Common duties may be aglow with holiness. Right deeds may be done from right motives and with right purposes. A worshipper drops a dollar into the treasury of the Lord. Christ is the great mind reader and knows his thoughts. That offering may add to his condemnation at last, or it may come up in sweet remembrance before God. Do not mistake pious behavior for holy living. Why do we do right? To maintain a reputation? To please ourselves? God sees the heart. An act? No man sees it except in the dimmest way. An act is the whole soul acting. The entire character is in it, the

<sup>1</sup> Cor. 10:31.

c. The  
Intents of  
the heart.

secret thought, the inner being. What man sees is appearance. The reality is behind. Therefore the heart must be purified. Let the Christian who would keep his motives pure abide in Christ.

Holy living is the best return we can make to Him who has chosen us, and the most eloquent way of preaching truth to the world. Christ said, "Ye are the light of the world." Catching the significance of this illustration John Newton said, "I cannot sweep the darkness out but I can shine it out." It was Christ who told us to do the truth. Truth is something to be done. A doctrine is first to be believed and then practised. The world does not read the Bible: it reads Christians. We sometimes hear the remark, "I greatly enjoy Dr. Blank's preaching." Preaching may be enjoyed. It may also be reproduced in daily life. The thoughtful hearer on leaving the church was met by a late comer with the inquiry, "Is the sermon done?" "Not done—only preached." The most eloquent and influential preaching comes from a joyous, faithful, Christian life. Is the world to mold the church or the church the world? It

IV. Holy  
living  
honors God  
and  
persuades  
man.

Mat. 5:14.

depends upon the life of the disciples of Christ. The world will not long believe in a religion which does not ennable character. Unbelievers have an intuitive sense that Christians should live holy lives. Respect that sentiment. So live that no man may stumble over your inconsistencies into ruin. Do not hide behind the excuse that the inconsistencies of Christians prove nothing against the truth of religion. It is indeed poor occupation for any immortal being, unreconciled to God, to carp at the sins of Christians and to make a religion out of a sneer. And yet if Christianity is what it claims to be it should make its votaries Christlike. Holy living on the part of Christians would preach the Gospel to every creature. "Ye are our epistle," said Paul to the Corinthians, "known and read of all men: Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us." A noble sentiment. The credit both of the human teacher and of the divine Master was in their keeping. All men in wicked Corinth would read and know them, and by their lives judge the religion of Jesus Christ. Thank God, there are thousands of faithful ones in the household of faith who are honoring Christ by

their holy living and are thus proclaiming the truth to dying men. Let us who are chosen ones live unto God. Our lives speak more loudly than our words. Light travels faster than sound. The flash of our example reaches the world before the report of our profession. A famous artist once wandering in the mountains of Switzerland met some officials who demanded his passport. "It is not with me but my name is Doré." "Prove it, if you are," replied the incredulous officers. Taking a piece of paper Doré hastily sketched a group of peasants standing by with such grace and skill that the men of the law exclaimed, "Enough, you must be Doré." "Write your name," is the challenge of the world to the follower of Christ. No awkward scrawl of a worldly life will do. Nothing but the grace and beauty of a character born of God will convince men that our profession is true.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN UNITY.

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One family—we dwell in him—  
One church, above, beneath,  
Though now divided by the stream,  
The narrow stream of death.

—*Charles Wesley.*

It is said that the centrifugal forces are growing weaker throughout the universe and the centripetal forces continually stronger. Whether or not this be true in astronomy proper I know not, but I am sure that it is true in that astronomy which begins and ends in the Star of Bethlehem.

—*A. J. Gordon.*

It is a pleasant thought, and one over which we can more profitably linger than we do, that all those who, in this appointed way, accept the crucified and risen Master as a divine and atoning Savior, compose one great family. It is the family of God the Father, the family of which Christ is the dear and loving elder brother, and of which the Holy Spirit is the Enlightener, Comforter and Guide. “One in Christ!” how tenderly and how grandly these words describe the indissoluble union of the believer with the Lord, and the blessedness of the heavenly family of which the true Christian family on earth is but the faintly foreshadowing type.

—*The Interior.*

We love the evangelicals because they love our Lord.  
—*Pusey.*

Unless all past experience be a delusion, the church can never be reunited on the basis of any claim or pretension which is the exclusive possession of any one of the branches—especially if it be a principle, which, like the

papacy, the apostolic succession, or the necessity of any one mode of baptism, involves the refusal of church rights to other denominations. Spiritual union must precede external unity. When our theology, our preaching and our lives say that Christ is our all in all then we shall meet and flow together.

—*Henry B. Smith.*

With all this segregation, the answer given by the four hundred and fifty millions to the question, What is the Gospel? is still the same. With exceptions so slight that we may justly set them out of the reckoning, the reply is still the same that it was in the apostolic age.—the central truth of the Gospel lies in the Trinity and the Incarnation, in the God that made us and the Saviour that redeemed us. When I consider what human nature and human history have been, and how feeble is the spirit in its warfare with the flesh, I bow my head in amazement before this mighty moral miracle, this marvellous concurrence evolved from the very heart of discord.

—*Gladstone.*

I never could regard the differences of the truly godly as essential; and though I have had my convictions and preferences, they were never anathematizing or exclusive. And I could have communed with any of their churches, and should not have been sorry if circumstances had enabled me to say I had done so.

—*William Jay.*

The mischief is that so many persons imagine we cannot have unity unless we have uniformity. Lay down the fundamental doctrine that uniformity is man's trick—unity is God's purpose. Yes, there are many regiments but one army; many denominations but one church; many creeds but one faith; many aspects but one life; many ways up the hill but one cross at the top of it. Do not lose yourself among the diversities when you might save yourself by looking at the unities \* \* \* Some sections of the church are nothing apart from their distinctiveness. Not where they are like others but where they are unlike or individual their genius and their power begin. All men could not be Congregationalists, nor could all men be Presbyterians, or Episcopilians. I believe in all sects that are honest; grace, mercy, and peace be to them, yea, to all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.

—*Joseph Parker.*

You are not to have any toleration which is founded on indifference. This truth I would build high as heaven.

—Henry Ward Beecher.

By the candlesticks being seven instead of one, as in the tabernacles, we are taught that whereas in the Jewish dispensation God's visible church was one, in the Gentile dispensation there are many visible churches; and that Christ Himself recognizes them alike.

—Canon Garrett.

All classes of Christians find that sectarian rancor soon dies out when they are working together among and for the real heathen.

—David Livingstone.

A man who went up in a balloon said that when he rose the fences that divided the country into fields and farms faded out, until soon he saw only one great, wide, beautiful landscape of meadow and field and forest, with river and stream shining in rich loveliness beneath the pure skies. So it is as we rise nearer to God in love and faith and Christian experience. The fences that divide God's great church into ecclesiastical fields and farms fade out, until at last they vanish altogether, and we see only one wide, holy, Christly Church.

—Eaton.

Eph. 3:15.

When a soul is born again it is born into a family. Not by its own act but by the act of God it is ushered into the household of faith. All that is needed to secure unity is that Christians should yield themselves wholly to the Holy Spirit. They would then be made one spiritually, as they were made one physically, by creative act. In Christ we do not choose our spiritual kindred

Unity established by God in the act of adoption.

We may deny them, we may hold aloof from them. Christians have even been known to so far forget their vocation as to decide who are and who are not members of the body of Christ. Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure. The Lord knoweth them that are His. All true believers are one in Christ. Christian unity is created in the very fact of the common adoption of the disciples of Christ. They may violate this unity or deny it. But they can no more destroy oneness in Christ than they can change the physical fact that God has made all people of one blood.

2 Tim. 2:19.

It is of great importance that this unity should be recognized and fostered by *Why should unity be cultivated?* Christians. The chief reason for this is that our Saviour prayed for it. Many blessings which the church greatly needs are not mentioned in the reported prayers of our Lord. That he petitioned for this blessing of unity not once but several times in one short prayer reveals how greatly He desires it and how essential it is to the life of His church.

Also to the power of His church. Unity makes a deep impression upon the world. Christ prays for such oneness among His

John 17:11.

*John 17:23.*

disciples that the world may see it, "that the world may know that thou hast sent me." If Christians are manifestly one in Christ the witnessing value of such union is incalculable. It testifies to all the world that Christ is indeed king over his followers and that the love of God triumphs in their mutual love. In this respect Balaam, the son of Beor, represents the world. In his vision He beheld Israel abiding in tents according to their tribes, and exclaimed, "How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob; and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" Heathenism to-day could not withstand the argument of a united Israel.

*Numb.24:5.*

Moreover unity strengthens the inner life of the church. Charity edifieth. I am a better man for loving my Christian brother. I come nearer to Christ in drawing nearer to his friends. Embracing in my affections all for whom He died, my sympathies are enlarged, my views of His kingdom are broadened, my whole spiritual nature is quickened and I grow in grace. On the other hand dissensions and estrangements among the followers of Christ react disastrously upon the life of the church. Religious experience becomes contracted and spiritual pride

springs up in any company of believers who live within themselves. Enlarge the horizon. Have a church home and love that home but let it be allied with the homes of all God's people. "Walk about Zion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, consider her palaces." Then return home refreshed and encouraged to take up in the smaller sphere the special work assigned by God.

One of the encouraging signs of the times is the earnest and growing desire on the part of many Christians to realize this unity for which Christ prayed. The <sup>A longing for unity now prevalent.</sup> Holy Spirit is moving the hearts of believers to this end. Multitudes of God's chosen ones are saying, If we are one in Christ why cannot our oneness be made real to ourselves and manifest to the world? The omen is propitious. It tells us that the end sought is already secured in the hearts of not a few. And the question should seriously engage the thought and the prayer of the Christian and the church, how can the family of God on earth become one in heart and in spirit as it is one in fact—and how can such oneness be made to appear to the world?

Some persons would answer this question by  
Is Christ  
divided by  
sectarian-  
ism? abolishing sects. This is a pleasing  
vision. We have read with approval  
that pleasing bit of prophetic poetry  
entitled, "No sect in heaven," and have dreamed  
of a return to the fascinating simplicity of early  
days when there were no Methodists, no Pres-  
byterians, no Baptists—but only Christians.  
Yet in our present earthly estate we are subject  
to some limitations of the flesh which our heav-  
enly inheritance will remove, and the spread of  
Christianity subjects it to some conditions  
which did not exist in the day of the apostles.  
Can we abolish Christian denominations? If  
so, is it desirable to put them away? They are  
strongly entrenched in the habits and the affec-  
tions of believers. If we ask whence came these  
divisions the answer is partly from differences  
in doctrinal belief, partly from dissimilarity in  
religious taste. Would these differences and  
dissimilarities vanish if the outward manifesta-  
tion of them were suppressed? Would unity  
be secured by calling all followers of Christ  
simply Christians? There would still be Chris-  
tians believing that immersion is the only Scrip-  
tural mode of baptism, and other Christians

holding to the apostolic succession of their clergy, and other Christians maintaining the possibility of falling from grace, and other Christians advocating the independence of the local church. Is Christ, therefore, divided? He may be most grievously divided when all denominational names are abolished, when all are called Christians, and each one maintains against his brother, "I am of Christ." Sects are indispensable: sectarianism is of the devil. It is not necessary that we should all be under one roof. Were there not, by God's own appointment, twelve tribes in Israel and was not Israel one? If the twelve apostles were living to-day would they all be in one church? Christians are divided only in appearance. Their differences are superficial. There are many battalions but one army. Denominations are good; it is denominationalism that is bad. Denominations prevent strife by affording each man an opportunity to find his place and to abide peacefully in it. There would be endless strife in any serious attempt to force all believers into one religious organization with a common creed and an appointed form of worship. Why not believe and worship after our

<sup>1</sup> Cor.1:12

various fashions and tastes? Christianity is wide enough to take us all in, with our favorite polities and pet doctrines included. We love one another all the same. The differences which separate are trivial and temporal. The tie that binds is mighty and eternal.

It is said, however, that the true unity must <sup>Unity of</sup> organization be such that it may be manifest to the world. If the church were visibly one church the converting power of such a spectacle, so it is claimed, would be great. But it should not be forgotten that in many localities multitudes of people have lived under just these conditions which are supposed to be so favorable to the spread of the Gospel. There have been numerous communities in which the population has been homogeneous, undivided by religious differences, practically free from all adverse influences which come from the existence of sects. There has been but one church known to such people. Yet we do not find that they fly as doves to the windows. Experience does not support the expectation that the world would repent if the church were one organization. There would remain in the carnal heart the same enmity against God which exists now

and which is the real explanation of that unbelief which is sometimes defended by the excuse of a divided church. A vital, spiritual unity among Christians would be a mighty power for the world's conversion; but a formal, spectacular uniformity would not move the hearts of men.

There are those who fondly hope to promote unity among Christians by bringing <sup>Unity in</sup> them all into agreement with some <sup>doctrine.</sup> simple statement of the essential truths of the Christian faith. "The Apostles' Creed" is often cited as a platform upon which all believers could stand in fraternal sympathy. It is argued that a large part of church creeds consists of the theological devices of men, that it is hay, wood and stubble which had better be burned and the pure gold of Gospel truth substituted in its place. This plan would still allow room for peculiarities of individual belief but would not justify schism on the ground of such peculiarities.

To some minds this scheme seems feasible. To others it appears mechanical and impracticable. Various questions suggest themselves. Do not our churches now enjoy and show forth, in their agreement upon fundamentals, all the real unity that might be secured by such organic union?

Do we not have more peace while cherishing our respective views in separate groups than we could hope to have if compelled to live as one family under a common roof? Who is to determine what is essential truth and to formulate our simple creed? Would not new sects arise outside the one church and thus the history of denominations repeat itself? Whatever the statement of belief might be would it not seem to some sensitive consciences like a compromise, a partial surrender of vital truth? Charles James Fox said, the only foundation for toleration is a degree of skepticism. If the Baptist, for example, is to unite with all other believers in the proposed way must he not grant that immersion, while essential to Christianity for him, may not be so for others? The plan seems to be based upon the implied uncertainty of truth. Its method looks like paring down the revelation of God until nothing remains to which objection can be made. Is it not better for the different members of the one household to unitedly proclaim the common Gospel of the Cross, and then for each to stand for that peculiar feature of the Gospel which seems to be neglected by the others? Then in the spirit

of Christ each of His followers could say, whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

Mat. 12:50.

It is not necessary that all believers should think alike. That, says some one, would be very much as if none of them thought at all. The grandeur and glory of divine truth appear in this, that they are beyond the conception of any class of Christians. Nothing short of positive unbelief could be more deplorable than stupid sameness of belief due to indifference. We shall never have unity of opinion among thinking men. In politics, in philosophy, in business, upon all great questions whether of theory or of practice, the best minds have reached different conclusions and will do so to the end of time. Why should we expect uniformity in theology alone? Why should we desire it? The manifest fraternity and sympathy which exists among brethren of different creeds furnish to the world stronger testimony to the divinity of our religion than would be afforded by universal consent to a common creed. The very fact that Christians differ in

Harmony  
with diver-  
sity better  
than  
monotonous  
agreement.

belief makes the spectacle of their unity in spirit more effective. As when warring political parties forget their contentions in face of a common enemy and rallying under the one flag exhibit the unity of patriotism which makes them all one, so the various sects of Christendom stand united around the Cross and show to the world that all are one in Christ. And the world is more moved by such unity, transcending even the strong convictions of theological opinion, than it would be by a unity which had no obstacles to overcome in the belief of the participants. Men say, there must be something in a religion which causes Baptists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists, while carrying their denominational flags, to unite lovingly under the banner of Christ.

Nor must we forget that each denomination stands for some important truth. *Denominations guard against a one-sided Christianity.* The sovereignty of God will never be a neglected doctrine so long as the Presbyterian church shall stand. But when that great truth threatened to lull men to sleep under either a sense of their security if Christians or of their inability to repent, God raised up the great Methodist church

to stand for the equally important doctrines of free grace and free will. So while the one church cries, Work out your own salvation, the other maintains, It is God which worketh in you, and thus the proportion of faith is maintained. Denominations have arisen because certain aspects of the gospel have been obscured. If sects were abolished certain truths might be neglected. The whole truth will emerge from all the friendly emulation. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to guide believers into all truth. If the Baptists are right we shall all eventually be Baptists. If Calvinism is the whole truth the church triumphant will be Calvinistic. If Episcopacy is the narrow way all believers will somehow be brought into it. Rather let us say that something better than that for which any man or denomination has stood will be made known to the church and that then He who said, "I am the truth," will in all things have the preeminence.

We ask then, What is the true unity which we want and how is it to be secured? It is the unity of life in Christ. It is the <sup>The true</sup> unity of branches which abide in one <sup>unity.</sup> vine. Unity must come through life and life is

John 17:11.

grounded in Christian adoption. For such unity Christ prayed. In a single sentence He gave the secret of Christian unity. "Holy Father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one as we are." The Father chooses His own and makes them one family in Christ. Such unity is rooted in the choice by God of His redeemed ones. It is neither outward organization nor similarity of belief that unites men, but sympathy of soul, likeness of experience, a common life. This is "the tie that binds." Here is the sheet let down from heaven. A vivid sense of having been chosen of God possessing the hearts of Christ's disciples binds them together. Napoleon's Old Guard owed much of their *esprit de corps* to the consciousness that they were picked men. Paul was fitted to be an apostle to the Gentiles because he recognized in every man elected of God a brother in Christ. Peter beheld strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, and yet welcomed them as brethren because they were "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." The author of the epistle to the Hebrews, as if thus defin-

1 Pet. 1:1,2.

ing the ground of unity, addresses his readers as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." The mention of God's choice of men seems to suggest to the inspired writers the thought of their oneness. Throughout his epistles this spiritual unity is the thought of Paul in his exhortations. Whether he urges the Romans to "be of the same mind one toward another," or beseeches the Corinthians that there be "no divisions" among them, or entreats the Ephesians to "keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," or expresses the hope that the Phillipians will "stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel"—wherever the apostle yearns to see his converts truly one in Christ, the context shows that he is not thinking of a uniformity which comes from outward observances or identical beliefs, but of a real spiritual oneness guaranteed by their common adoption in Christ.

This true unity may be fostered and strengthened by the efforts of believers. Their chief duty is to become conscious of and to give expression to a unity which exists by the will of God.

In the first place, the root idea of

Unity pro-  
moted by ac-  
cepting the  
true idea of  
the Church.

Mat. 16:18.

the church may be recognized. "Upon this rock I will build my church." It is Christ's church, not man's. The power that is building the church is not human but divine. These facts forbid us on the one hand to create artificial boundaries to the church, and on the other to regard the prosperity of the church as dependent upon our devices. Our part is largely to

Exod. 14:13.

"stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord."

We are to remember that God is making up the number of His redeemed family, and we are simply to recognize each one who is brought into that family and to love him as a brother in Christ. When Christians do this there is Christian unity whatever may be the denominations or creeds under which believers group themselves. A man born again in Christ comes into new relations with all other men born again in Christ. He is not an isolated fragment of humanity but a member of a spiritual body by virtue of God's choice of him. Christ says to His disciples, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold and one shepherd." Canon Westcott's comment on this verse is, "The bond of fellowship is shown

John 10:16.

to lie in the common relation to our Lord.” The church is the whole company of regenerate souls, the spiritual kingdom of God on earth. Paul recognizes this fact when he says, “Unto the church of God which is at Corinth.” Outward organization is of little moment when compared with this spiritual oneness. Christ is organizing unity among His disciples as He builds His church. One here and another there He calls, one here and another there who truly love Him, and have not defiled their garments, a church within a church, these he collects and names and separates and by His own power makes them one. They have only to rejoice in the unity which He has created. Let the grace of God have free course in the hearts of believers, and unity is established without effort on their part. They need only accept what God has bestowed.

The sense of this unity may be stimulated by the meeting of believers for conference, prayer and fellowship. Says F. B. Meyer, *Unity ex-pressed through fellowship.* “The great conventions for the quickening of spiritual life on both sides of the Atlantic in which believers meet irrespective of name or sect are doing an incalcula-

ble amount of good in breaking down the old lines of demarcation and making real our spiritual oneness." Church congresses cannot create unity but they may express it. Conferences and conventions are of service after such unity has been realized in the spiritual life of God's people. They may serve to remove misconceptions and to banish obstacles to the full harmony and sympathy of the various branches of the church of Christ. If they meet to discuss their differences and to reduce doctrine to its lowest terms they will come to grief. If they assemble to emphasize the fact that believers are one from the beginning through no act or effort of their own, but because the seal of God's electing grace is upon them all, they may adjourn with deepened gratitude to their common Savior and a new love for one another. Such assemblies as those of the Evangelical Alliance, bringing together Christians from all parts of the world, and giving expression to their common faith and hope, are potent agencies in answering the prayer of Christ that all his disciples may be one. On a smaller scale the fraternal greetings and salutations exchanged between conventions of churches, the

exchange of pulpits by ministers of different denominations, and all interchange of courtesies among branches of the church, are adapted to make them feel that they are no longer strangers and foreigners to one another, but fellow citizens and members of the one household of God. But the forcing of these outward manifestations when the inner unity is absent will result in harm.

Eph. 2:19.

Co-operation in the work of God on earth, if grounded in a common vital union with Christ, will promote unity among believers. In our great cities many churches of different names unite in revival work with enthusiasm. Denominational differences are lost sight of in the one desire to save souls. God has graciously raised up a band of men specially gifted to do the work of evangelists, and as they go from place to place they find the various churches quite ready to join hands at the Cross of Christ. Such meetings serve at once to express the affection of Christians for one another and to augment it. So, too, such a gathering as the London Conference of Missions, at which Christians of every name took sweet and wise counsel over the advance-

Unity shown  
in federation  
for Christian  
work.

ment of God's kingdom in foreign lands, accomplished much in the way of building together the hearts of believers in Christian love. The association together of local churches in temperance work, in works of charity and benevolence, serve the same end. Co-operation among several churches is better than monopoly of the field by one church. Too much has been said about the foolish multiplication of churches. There is often a nearer approach to Christian unity, less friction and discord, where several churches of different names exist, than would be possible if an attempt were made to form a "union church." We must not be alarmed by superficial distinctions nor fascinated by formal unities. The important question is how the Master's work can best be done. Co-operation is the answer—all uniting against a common foe and each building over against his own house.

Christian unity will be fully secured when believers abide fully in Christ. It lies within the power of each disciple to promote such <sup>The vine and the branches the best type of unity.</sup> unity by seeking close fellowship with his Lord. A Christian minister may do much to make all believers one without going outside the bounds of his

own parish. By nourishing the spiritual life of himself and his church he does more for the unity of believers than he can do by organizing conventions and by devising schemes. Paul says to the Ephesians, "In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the <sup>Eph. 2:22.</sup> Spirit." This is the true unity, that which comes about through spiritual agencies. Christians are to be builded together rather than to build themselves together. This building together is to be in Christ, a common personal relation to the Lord. The work of building is to be accomplished by the Spirit; man is not sufficient for these things.

For we must recognize the arduousness of the undertaking. It is immensely difficult to build men together. Statesmen find it so, teachers find it so, parents find it so. <sup>Not easy of accomplishment.</sup> If there were but one man in this country the science of government would be extremely simple. The solitary inhabitant would be a law unto himself. But when it is required to build together seventy millions of people, of differing tastes, opinions, habits, with conflicting interests and ambitions, into one compact, harmonious organization, into a body that

shall be in reality as in name a nation, the difficulty is appalling. It is comparatively easy to instruct a single pupil. To build together fifty, a hundred, a thousand scholars into a well ordered school or college, with unity, harmony, a common spirit—calls for ability of a high order. A family—united, the members mutually helpful, bound together by common aims and sacrifices—does it not demand the highest human wisdom, the largest patience, to secure such a household? Yet the welfare of mankind depends largely upon the thoroughness with which people are builded together. And when we come to the problem of building men together religiously the difficulties are greatly multiplied. Granted that God can convert a soul. Can He bring that soul into close fellowship with the next soul converted, and the next, and the next? Admitted that men may be brought to live to the glory of God separately—can they be made to glorify Him in the trying experiences and duties of a spiritual household? The answer is—Yes. They can be builded together in Christ through the Spirit. They then become an habitation of God. Stones scattered about or lying in heaps however fin-

ished and polished do not make a temple. A great mob of individuals is not a state. A chance assortment of children is not a family. A mere multitude of Christians is not the spiritual kingdom of Christ on earth. It is the divine purpose not only to convert and to sanctify men one by one but to fit them together and to build them up into an everlasting temple for the indwelling of God.

How is this to be done? Not through common forms, methods, church governments, but through the Spirit. Repentance, faith, union with Christ, growth in grace—these are the family bonds in the household of God. “I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” <sup>But possible through the Spirit.</sup> John 17:23. The great organizing, unifying power is Life. This comes from Him of whom it is written “In him was life.” The Holy Spirit has power to overcome even the immense difficulties which we see in the way, and to build believers into a harmonious society worthy to be called the Kingdom of God. If He can resist the obstacles which resist His first entrance into the human heart, if He can bring reluctant sinners into right relations with Christ, surely He can

bring sanctified saints into right relations with one another. All that is needed to make the church on earth one church is spirituality. This is but another name for the indwelling of the Spirit. Therefore all Christians should aim to let the Spirit have His way with them, to offer no hindrance to His working, to pray instantly for His blessing.

The expectation of unity should be cherished by both the individual and the church. The

**Responsibil-  
ity of the  
Christian  
and of the  
church.**

follower of Christ is not chosen that he may live a separate, isolated life. He is to be fitted into other lives. He is to be builded together with other Christians. The church is an instrumentality ordained of God to organize the Christian family. It is the duty of every Christian to come into right relations with other Christians as well as to be in right relations with Christ. No one is to be absorbed in saving his own soul. We are members one of another. To be fitted into one's place may be attended with some friction and strain and possibly breakage of sharp edges and corners. This calls for self-crucifixion, humility, patience. These are fruits of the Spirit and only by yielding to the

Spirit can the believer be fitted to his place.

Each church should be a unit in Christ and then all churches would be one. If by a spontaneous impulse all the churches of Christ would cast off worldliness and penitently return to God and seek a fresh baptism of the Spirit they would draw together and be one in Christ. This is the great need if we are to realize unity among Christians. To become more heavenly not more attractive to the world, to gain more spirituality not more machinery, to seek consecration rather than new methods, to be manifestly holier within not more imposing without, to grow mighty in spiritual and eternal things not rich in the earthly and temporal—this is the vocation of the church of Christ, and when this is attained the coveted unity will be ours.

## CHAPTER XIX. A MISSIONARY MOTIVE.

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Christianity is in its nature a missionary religion, converting, aggressive, advancing, encompassing the world. —*Max Muller.*

I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through so that I could but gain souls for Christ. While I was asleep I dreamed of these things, and when awake the first thing I thought of was this great work. All my desire was for their conversion and all my hope was in God. —*David Brainerd.*

The foreign missionary idea is the necessary completion of the Christian life. It is the apex to which all the lines of the pyramid lead up. The Christian life without it is an incomplete, mangled thing. —*Phillips Brooks.*

When he came here there were no Christians; when he went away there were no heathen.

—*Inscription on a monument to John Geddie at Aneityum.*

The Word of God makes no doubtful testimony. It acknowledges that men hold lords many and gods many, but affirms one only name whereby men must be saved.

—*Arthur T. Pierson.*

Many of the conversions effected by the modern missions of the Gospel are more decisive evidence of its abiding supernatural power than was the cure of the life-long cripple at the temple gate, or the raising of Lazarus of Bethany. It was a far greater miracle to convert the barbarous Malagasy, the Tahitians, the Samoans, the Santels, the Bechuanas, the cannibals of New Guinea, within

fifty years, into such intelligent and godly Christians as we know them to be, than it was for Peter and John to straighten the lame legs and feet of the cripple at the beautiful gate of the temple.

—E. White.

The starting point of Christian missions is the conversion of the individual. When the first soul is saved, the kingdom of heaven is at hand. No sooner is Andrew numbered among the disciples, than he finds his own brother Simon and brings him to Jesus. Thus missions begin.

Birth of the  
missionary  
idea.

In the first place, the chosen one feels that what is so good for himself is good for all men. His experience is fitted to be universal. The kingdom of God is within him. He has in his own soul that dominion which is to be "from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth." The Christian is a microcosm. On the limited arena of his life has taken place that battle between God and Satan which is waging over the whole earth. The victory achieved in his case is the prophecy of the millennium. God designs to do for a great multitude which no man can number what He has already done for the individual believer. This the devout believer soon comes to perceive.

1. The  
desire to  
share the  
blessing.

Zeich. 9:10.

He begins to realize that in his own humble experience he has the key to the method and the purpose of God's work of grace among men. Spiritually he is an abridged history of the salvation of the race. This brings him into sympathy with the movement of God's kingdom in the world. It is the very movement of which he is conscious in his own inner life, the movement of human redemption, the movement to deliver men from sin and to exalt them to holiness. His prayer is that his experience may become universal, that all men may be as he is except his bonds. Thus the most zealous supporters of Christian missions will be those whose experience of God's saving grace has been most vivid and profound.

Acts 26:29.

Not only a desire to share this blessing with **2. Expectation of God's blessing upon missionary labor.** an unsaved world, but also faith in the success of missionary work will spring from personal experience of God's salvation. The Christian's confidence in the power of the Cross to redeem mankind rests upon the solid rock of experience. William Jay, when a young man, called upon John Newton and mentioned the obstacles to the extension of the Gospel which op-

pressed his mind. "My brother," replied the venerable clergyman, "I have never doubted the power of God to convert the heathen world since He converted me." The chosen one has this same faith. Grace has saved him. Then it will save others. He was as unworthy as they. They need the same deliverance which he has enjoyed. Such was the confidence in which Paul threw himself upon the Paganism of Asia Minor, Greece and Rome. His philosophy of religion was learned on the road to Damascus. Hear him rehearse the story of his conversion before the mob at Jerusalem, and in the presence of governors and kings. Virtually he said, what has saved me will save you. His faith was great because his knowledge of God's saving grace was experimental. He was constantly telling that story. Perhaps there was not a city visited that did not hear it. And this is the blessed inheritance of every true disciple, the knowledge that with his birth God's providence began to open the way to his heart, and that when that way was open divine grace advanced along it, and took him a willing captive, so that he stands to-day a chosen heir of God ordained to eternal life. Hence his confidence

in the Gospel for the redemption of all nations. The Lord knoweth them that are His. He knows them because He has chosen them. He has chosen them from Asia, Africa, and the Isles of the Sea, no less than from highly civilized races. No one shall be lost of those whom He has given to Christ. Here one shall be taken and there another, till the number of the elect shall be made up. Not always from the most likely places will He call His beloved. His grace has a long arm. As of old it reached over the idolatrous Moab and chose Ruth, and out into despised Syrophenechia and selected a nameless woman, and overtook its chosen one on the way that goeth toward the south, Ethiopia, often passing by Israel, but never failing in its purpose, so to-day it reaches round the globe, making the last first and the first last, but never missing a single soul on whom the seal of God has once been set.

Out of the believers experience comes also his sense of responsibility for preaching the **3. Stewards of the grace of God.** Gospel to every creature. If at first he fancies that his personal salvation is the chief end of his adoption he soon comes, under the lead of the Holy Spirit,

to see that God saves him that he may help to save his fellow men. It is his privilege to have a part in that work for which Christ laid down his life. He is debtor to all men and must seek out his creditors. "Ye shall be witness unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." The chosen one will quickly come to understand his Master's plan for the evangelization of the world. The church into which he comes is not merely a society for pleasant fellowship and self-edification. It is a band of witnessing disciples ordained to proclaim saving grace to a dying world. Bishop Levering, of the Moravian church, when asked how it was that the members of that church contributed so largely to missions replied, "When converts join the church we try to get them to realize that they are joining a great missionary society." A selfish religion is a dead religion. A religion which does not go out to seek and to save lacks the essential elements of gratitude and obedience. Christ died for me and asks that I take up my cross and follow Him in his saving work. "I gave my life for thee, what hast thou given for me?" We are called to something more than en-

Rom.1:14.

Acts 1:8.

joyment of his gifts. We are called to service, to self-sacrifice, to stewardship.

Such is the foundation of the missionary idea in the experience of God's chosen ones.

**Motives and inspirations.** What are its special motives and inspirations? What are some of the facts which prompt to missionary zeal and activity?

First, this is a lost world. The Christian looking back at himself before his conversion

**The old world lieth in wickedness.** knows that he was then dead in trespasses and sins without God and without hope. He knows that all unrenewed souls are in this condition.

Forever fronting us in its awful reality is the fact of human sin. There is nothing new in this. It is the same to-day that it was when Paul wrote the first chapter to the Romans. This fact we must lay as a burden upon our hearts. "We shall never evangelize the world if we think the world is only in a swoon." We dare not cut from our Bible those passages which teach the doom of unrepentant sinners. We cannot venture to believe the words of Satan to his servants, Ye shall not surely die. In missionary work we are seeking the lost. The

heathen world is a lost world—not unfortunate merely, not miserable chiefly, but guilty and under condemnation, needing not improvement but conversion. A missionary beholding multitudes prostrating themselves in a pagan temple wrote, "O, how my heart did weep over them in their lost and ruined state." Another, "Had I ten thousand lives I would gladly give them all away to help these degraded ones." David T. Stoddard, of blessed memory, said, "Life is short and souls around are perishing. Our great engrossing business ought to be the salvation of these dying men." A young missionary of the American Board was asked, "What led you to be a missionary?" "Bare figures overwhelmed me," he replied. "When I read that there were 856,000,000 heathen, of whom 30,000 a day go to their death without Christ, I was fairly staggered and asked, Do I believe it?" Missions were born of this spirit. This is "the mind that was in Christ," and should be in us.

Secondly, Christ admits no rivals. Religions are many; there is but one revelation. The heathen are not saved by their superstitions and idolatries however

All the Gods  
of the nations  
are idols.

Ps. 9:15.

sincere. There is not in all the Bible a word favorable to the gods of the nations. Nowhere does the Word of God say that the earth-born religion of any heathen is better than no religion at all. Uninspired men say that. They even say that heathen religions are good enough for heathen. That is not a Scriptural idea. The Bible teaching is that "the heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made." An examination of 123 passages in which the heathen are mentioned discovers not a single favorable allusion to their religious belief, condition or prospects. The study of comparative religions may serve a purpose with the missionary who would understand the religious ideas of the people whom he would save. But a "Congress of Religions" does more harm than good. Whatever it may be in theory, practically it fosters the fatal error that the religions of the nations are good for those who believe them, that Buddhism is as good for the Buddhist as Christianity for the Christian, that not only the Gospel but the Koran also is the power of God unto salvation. The subtle poison of this thought paralyzes missionary zeal. It is a sad mistake, and in the light of revelation and of experience

a sinful mistake. Christianity is universal and exclusive. It brooks no rival. "There is none other." The Master's own words are "all the world." We go to the ends of the earth with the Gospel of the Cross on our lips to tell all men, not that we have a religion to propose which is much better than theirs, but that we have a Savior to announce, the only Savior, their Savior if they will accept Him, and that whosoever believeth on Him shall not perish but shall have everlasting life.

Thirdly, Religion alone can save men from sin and prepare them for heaven. Some trust in education and some in civilization and some in reformation but these do not change the heart. An educated, elegant heathenism is in some respects more hideous and more hopeless than a barbarous heathenism. Lost sinners need not culture but conversion, not mental training but the new birth, not the speller and the arithmetic but the Law and the Gospel. Christians should feel this fact deeply. They know that it was the grace of the Gospel that brought salvation to themselves. All their accomplishments did not reconcile them to God. We cannot save the

The power of  
God unto  
salvation.

heathen by teaching them to wear broadcloth and to eat with a fork and to ride on the limited express. No more can we redeem them by teaching them to read Homer and to solve quadratic equations. Whatever advantages we may provide for them—educational, medical, social, commercial, political, we utterly fail to set up God's kingdom among them if we do not win their hearts to the love of Christ. Refinement is not the power of God unto salvation. Of this fact biography is full of illustrations. In such men as Napoleon, Mirabeau, Lord Bacon, Fox, Aaron Burr, Prof. Webster, the highest mental endowments failed to restrain the lowest animal passions. These cases are not exceptional. Many men of great brains have been men of bad hearts. Why should it not be so? There is nothing in external polish to check internal decay. Buckle says, "Neither the individuals nor the ages that have been most distinguished for intellectual achievements have been distinguished for moral excellences." Tylor in his "Primitive Culture" calls attention to the fact that savages civilized but not Christianized lose old virtues and gain new vices. In ancient Athens and Corinth, centers of intellect and

culture, the lowest vices reached a development unknown to simple, uncultured Sparta. The world is not to become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ by means of the severe sciences and the polite arts. Neither is the light of morality sufficient to irradiate the dark places of the earth. Confucius gave to China as good a moral code as human wisdom can devise. For three thousand years China has had an opportunity to show what power of salvation there is in moral teachings, and to-day China is the rockiest soil for the seed of Christian truth. The ancient Hebrews sought redemption through the Law and under this dispensation Israel sank first into indifference, then into idolatry, and finally in the time of Christ into formality and hypocrisy. As handmaids of religion the forces of civilization have their place. To use our Savior's illustration the birds of the air lodge in the branches of the tree. But so far as the redemption of the world is concerned we might illustrate these agencies—the arts, the moral virtues, education, refinement of manners—by that caricature preserved in the museum at Naples, the picture of a butterfly holding the reins which lie on the back of a dragon, repre-

senting Seneca as he tried to restrain the passions of Nero by philosophy. In his mad race to eternal death man is not to be held back by any butterfly civilization which ignores Christ and the Cross. May God save His church from sending to the heathen an attenuated Gospel or any substitute for the message of divine love and grace. Bishop Colenso of South Africa once tried the experiment. He maintained against the missionaries that what the Africans needed first was the humanizing influence of mental and ethical training. He agreed to take a number of young men and thus to train them for three years, saying nothing to them of religion. At the end of the term he told them that they were free to do as they pleased, and invited them to go on with him unto perfection. The next morning they had all disappeared, leaving behind their books and even the clothes with which they had been provided. The Bishop went to the missionaries, acknowledged his mistake, and gave to the mission fifty pounds for the work of Christ.

Finally, the proved fitness of the Gospel of   
*There is* Christ to win and to redeem all con-  
*none like it.* ditions of men refreshes our hope and

establishes our faith in the speedy coming of the kingdom of God. On these two pillars Christianity is founded. (a.) It is the only salvation effectual for any man. (b.) It is the only salvation adapted to all men. The first of these propositions has been illustrated. From the day of Pentecost until now the second has appeared true. Tell of Christ's love to men who dwell among Greenland's icy mountains and their hearts will respond as did the hearts of disciples on the shores of Galilee. Preach Christ and Him crucified to the natives of hot Africa and Christian graces will begin to adorn their lives. Paul says that there is no difference in men for that all have sinned. We might also say that there is no difference for that all may live in Christ. The individual Christian perceives that his experience is fitted to be universal. Looking at the goings of the Spirit through the world he is not surprised at great results. Already the morning cometh. Africa is no longer the Dark Continent. China is planted with Christian missions. Japan's ports sealed for centuries now welcome the Christian school, the Christian press, the Christian church. India, Burmah, Siam know the story

Rom. 3:22,

of the Cross, the islands of the sea own the Gospel sway, even Spain admits the open Bible, the McCall mission in France "equals for glory the shame of the Huguenot massacres," while in Italy the cross supplants the crucifix and justification by faith is proclaimed under the shadow of the Vatican.

What an incentive to renewed labor! What a stimulus to prayer! "Ye that are the Lord's remembrancers, take ye no rest, and give him no rest, till he establish, and till he make Jerusalem a praise in the earth." Mark Hopkins used to say that we must wrestle with God for missions as Jacob wrestled at Peniel. Prayer is the very life-power of the missionary church. And the final triumph is in sight. In the glowing words of Milton we may salute Christ as King, and invoke his triumphant return to earth:

"Come, O thou that hast the seven stars in thy right hand. Come forth out of thy royal chamber, O Prince of all the kings of the earth. Put on the visible robes of thy imperial majesty. Take up that unlimited sceptre which thy almighty Father hath bequeathed thee, for now

*Isa. 62:6,7.*

the voice of thy bride calls thee, and all things sigh to be renewed."

Christian missions call for the highest type of piety in the churches. A deep spiritual life is required to sustain a steady interest in missionary work.

The missionary spirit betokens nearness to Christ.

A low grade of Christian experience has not the vitality, the fervor requisite to the preaching of the Gospel to every creature. Missions make a larger demand upon the spiritual nature than any other form of Christian labor. To care for the souls of multitudes whom we have never seen, separated from our sympathy by habits and customs repugnant to our taste and offensive to our intelligence—not until we have been partakers of the sufferings of Christ and have shared his agony for the souls of lost men, can we enter heartily upon the great and glorious work for which he laid down his life. Here is one test of our attainments. The missionary spirit is the mind that was in Christ. Only as we are in him can we come to this high calling. And missions develop the highest type of piety as well in the heart that loves them as in the life that is actively devoted to them. No Christian can give himself earnestly to the mission-

ary cause—whether he goes forth like Judson, and Carey, and Moffat to sow seed on foreign soil, or at home labors and prays and gives of his means to support the laborers—without receiving spiritual blessing in his own soul a hundred fold. If we wanted a revival of true religion in a lukewarm church we should be sure of it if we could secure a revival of missionary zeal. In missions it is pre-eminently true that if we cast our bread upon the waters it will return to us after many days.

What do I owe to this work? Certainly the **Personal relation of the chosen one to missions.** least I owe is every penny I can give, not after I have satisfied every desire for self-gratification, but with self-denial and cheerful willingness.

Do I owe more? Yes, I owe my sympathy, my active support, my prayers.

Do I still owe more? It would seem that in a land like this, overflowing with educated and consecrated young people, hearing the repeated and pressing calls for missionaries, somebody owes more. Are there none of us who owe our lives to this work? William Carey, sitting at his cobbler's bench making shoes, drew upon a piece of leather a map of the world, and as he

pointed to this map and his finger rested on vast areas given over to darkness, he said—These are pagan, and these are pagan, and these and these,—then he locked his shop and went to the darkest place he could find in all the world, and lo, in a short time it was light with the radiant lives of redeemed men. Is there any work into which we can put the years of life where they will count more for Christ? A prompt service is doubly acceptable to our Master. Zinzendorf said to a Moravian brother at Hernhut, “Can you go as a missionary to Greenland?” “Yes.” “Can you go to-morrow?” “If the cobbler has finished my shoes I will go to-morrow?” That was a quick response. Are we needed at home where there are a hundred applicants for every position more than in the mission fields where the laborers are few? About a half a century since a young man went to the missionary rooms in Boston and said, “If there is any place on the missionary field especially difficult and solitary where no one else will go, send me to that place.” He was sent to one of the loneliest islands of Micronesia where he labored till a few years since, when he wrote, “All God’s

days are fragrant with blessings." Christ says to certain disciples, "Great is your reward in heaven." Later he says, "A hundredfold more in this world." He must have meant this specially for the missionaries. Let the church pray for a fresh baptism of missionary consecration upon her sons and daughters. Let parents dedicate their children to the work of missions. Wesley said, "If I had three hundred men who feared nothing but God, hated nothing but sin, and were determined to know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified, I would set the world on fire." It is fire that we need, burning hearts. Then when the call comes we shall at once respond, Here am I, send me.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE HOPE OF HEAVEN.

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It is not that we are going to inherit heaven as a great reward, but are to so live that heaven becomes a necessity.  
The world is outgrown. —*Domer.*

Christians never say farewell for the last time.

—*Christmas Evans.*

It appeared to me that winter that probably when we get to heaven, our views and joys and holy exercises will so far surpass anything that we have ever had in this life, that we shall hardly be able to recognize the fact that we had any religion while in this world. —*Finney.*

A boy runs an errand for me and I give him two pence; but if I were to give him a thousand pounds he would not believe that it was payment for his service; he would feel that the reward was far above anything that he had earned, and he would conclude that I must have given him that great sum of money out of pure generosity. And no child of God, however much he has served his Lord, ever thinks that he deserves to be an heir of heaven, a priest and a king, to live forever at God's right hand in untold blessedness. O, no; all this must be a gift. We could not have earned such a blessing as this. —*Spurgeon.*

When I enter the invisible world I do not expect to find things different from what the Word of God represented them to me here. The voice I shall then hear will be the same I now hear upon the earth, and I shall say, This is indeed what God said to me; and how thankful I am that I did not wait till I had seen in order to believe.

—*Adolph Monod.*

The Christian is not one who looks up from earth to heaven but one who looks down from heaven to earth.

—*Lady Powerscourt.*

**The Bible tells us much concerning heaven.** It was Horace Bushnell who was stopped on the street one Monday morning by a friend who asked, "What did you preach about yesterday?" "I preached on the fact that we know more about the future than about the past." His theme had been Heaven and he had maintained that God's Word reveals much concerning the future life. Was he not right? It is sometimes carelessly said that there is a dark veil before the hereafter. But the Scriptures abound in passages which throw open the pearly gates and disclose the life of the heavenly city. God does not rebuff our reverent desire to know much concerning heaven. He has brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel. Most of what is said of our ignorance of the future is untrue. By the aid of the Bible we may know far more concerning the home of the redeemed than the astronomer by the aid of the telescope can discover concerning the starry worlds which shine in the evening sky.

**Heaven a place of congenial companions.** The dwellers in heaven are God and His chosen ones. Christ is there, the Holy Spirit, and the blessed angels. This is a harmonious company. All

its redeemed members have been selected and trained with a view to spiritual fellowship. Heaven is the home of God's elect family. To this they were chosen. Our Savior prays, "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am." From the very beginning the Father has been gathering His loved ones for eternal companionship with Himself. Three things were done from the foundation of the world. The Lamb was slain, the Kingdom was prepared, and the elect were chosen. Everything is prearranged. The Savior said, "I go to prepare a place for you." He prepares the place for the disciple and the disciple for the place. The earth is not the Christian's home. His citizenship is not here. He was not chosen chiefly for a spiritual career in the flesh, nor for the religious joys of time. His real inheritance is "reserved in heaven," and for this inheritance he is "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." This is the relation of adoption to immortality in Christ. God is making up His heaven by graciously calling and redeeming a great multitude which no man can number from all lands and ages. These

John 17:24.

Rev. 13:8.

Mat 25:34.

Eph. 1:4.

John 14:2.

1 Pet. 1:5.

Rev. 17:14.

are to dwell in His presence and to behold His glory forever. "They that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful."

Abraham looked for a city. Wandering shepherds are lonely. A city is a center of fellowship. Men congregate in cities because men

**Earthly  
affections  
and relations  
enlarged and  
glorified in  
heaven.**

Heb. 12:22.

are fond of society. Social intercourse is pleasant to the soul. It is also beneficial. "Ye are come to an innumerable company." How the

Word accumulates the materials for a heavenly society, gathering into one great throng kindred spirits. Heaven is pre-eminently a social state. Isolation and solitude belong to sin and guilt. Holiness fosters fellowship. Saints sit down with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom. Friends separated for a brief moment come together for the intimacies of eternity. On earth social life is marred by sin. The heavenly society is at once holy and complete. No sinful beings are there. No selfish deed greets the eye. No evil word pains the ear. Not an unrighteous thought flits through any mind. All the company are animated by one affection, by one supreme devotion. To be perfectly holy and to be in the

company of holy beings is heaven. Intimacy of relation will prevail. We cannot clearly conceive what relationship can be closer than that of husband and wife, parent and child, but in heaven there will be more loving relationships than these. Character furnishes the strongest basis of friendship. The supreme relation will be that between the redeemed soul and God. It will be heaven to see Christ. The believer will come into new and more tender intimacy with his Lord. For this he will be prepared by his union with Christ on earth. "Whom not having seen ye love." The chosen one knows Christ better than he knows any earthly friend

Evidently then the believer knows much about heaven. And largely for the reason that he already has a foretaste of it.

Heaven is like the highest spiritual experiences which he now enjoys. In what  
sense  
"heaven be-  
gins below."

The Word tells us that God "hath

made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance Colos. 1:12

of the saints in light." It is not that we "shall be made meet," but are already meet. Heaven

is therefore like our present spiritual life but purified and exalted. "The Spirit itself beareth

witness with our spirit, that we are the children

Rom. 8:16  
17.

John 17:3.

of God; and if children, then heirs." Heirs already! Heirs of what? Of a religious life peculiar to this earthly existence? Of emotions and affections which are to give place to something altogether different? Not at all. Heirs of that inheritance into which the saints in light have already entered. It is ours in part to-day. Eye hath not seen it but the Spirit has already revealed it. "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent." And do we not now know God and Jesus Christ? Our present fellowship with the Savior is heaven begun. Intimations of the glory which awaits us come in the sweet communings with Christ which are vouchsafed to all his chosen ones on earth. There is one Being in heaven whom the redeemed on earth do know. We may be strangers to angels and archangels, but the moment we enter the pearly gate there on the right hand of God is our Christ, the dearest friend we have ever known, and in whom for years we have rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

In what then will the blessedness of heaven consist? Let the Scriptures tell us.

Our Savior in one passage describes heaven

as "eternal life" "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal."

Meaning of  
"eternal  
life."

Mat. 25:46.

And in another passage he defines life eternal as the knowledge of God and Jesus Christ whom He has sent. With this agrees the vision of John in which he sees the "new heaven," and hears the great voice saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them." To be with God is heaven.

John 17:3.

Rev. 21:3.

Heaven is rest—rest from labor, rest in labor. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God." Rest is a sweet word to weary souls amid the cares and burdens of life. But the rest of heaven is not idleness. "His servants shall serve him." They "shall serve him day and night in his temple." In such service they find unutterable and endless delight.

Heb. 4:9.

Rev. 22:3.  
7:15.

Perfect knowledge will satisfy their minds. A great student of the Bible once said that much of our time on earth should be spent in preparing questions to be answered in heaven. Earthly knowledge "shall vanish away." "Now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." All doubts and misunderstandings will be put to flight. The capacity

1 Cor. 13:12.

for knowledge will be enlarged. Limitations of the mind will be removed. Man will no longer be "a seeker after truth," but in God's light the redeemed intelligence will rejoice in wondrous disclosures of divine truth.

*Rev. 21:27.*

*Jude 24.*

The saved soul will be free from sin. "There shall in no wise enter into it anything that defileth." It is sin which makes life sad and wretched. Afflictions could be borne patiently but the sense of inborn sin breaks the heart. Christ will present his beloved faultless before the presence of God's glory. "To-morrow," said the dying duke to his son, "you will be a duke—and I shall be a king." Kings and priests unto God! Holy as He is holy! Hardly can we conceive such blessedness.

If we ask what will be the occupations of heaven the Scriptures do not refuse an answer. The multitude of the redeemed are busy in doing God's will. No higher felicity can we imagine. It will undoubtedly be an increasing joy to the heirs of eternal life. Service will be fitted to their various capacities, for there will be "diversities of gifts" in heaven. Much tribulation comes to men on earth who do not find their places. In

*The occupa-  
tions of  
heaven.*

another world every talent will be appointed its fitting work. Strength will not fail. Much of our weariness in well doing comes from the weakness of our frail bodies. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Weariness comes too from the monotony of our toil. Work is often drudgery. Sometimes the task is distasteful. Sometimes failure chills our zeal. In heaven we shall have the joy of uninterrupted success. By the grace of God we shall do every task perfectly. Each power will have its fair opportunity, and powers will be enlarged and multiplied. Peter speaks of an inheritance <sup>1 Pet. 1:4.</sup> that "fadeth not away." This means not only that it continues forever but that it always retains its original attractiveness. It is a flower that never withers, nor loses its freshness and bloom. Such will be the occupation of heaven. It will never lose its fascination. Rather will it engage the enthusiasm and the devotion of the redeemed more completely as the ages roll by. Its variety will perhaps be one of its conspicuous features. We shall not always be doing the same thing. How many diversified ministries a city presents to the curious eye. We can but faintly imagine the many services to which God

Mat. 26:41.

will invite us in the heavenly city. Our bliss will be enhanced by the harmony of the workers. We shall be associated with God and angels and the spirits of just men made perfect in united labors for the glory of God. No friction, no competition, no clashing of interests, no waste, but perfect and loving fellowship in one service. Divine wisdom will preside over all. Every act will be infallibly directed to beneficent ends. We shall have the abiding consciousness of God's oversight and hence of our usefulness. And to crown all, the smile of God's approval upon every effort and His "well done" rewarding all our work.

Heaven is in no sense a reward. No one deserves, no one receives eternal blessedness as a compensation for a good life. But **The hope of  
heaven  
founded up,  
on the fact of  
adoption.** the Christian has a title to his inheritance. This title is the free, gracious, unmerited gift of God. The believer is an heir, not because of any goodness in himself, but because of his union with Christ. His title to heaven is therefore as valid and as strong as that of Christ himself. On this account the Christian's hope is "an anchor to the soul." It is not because he

has done anything worthy of God's favor. It is not on the ground that this life has been free from marked wickedness. It is not because God is indulgent. It is not because all sinners will sometime and somehow be brought into the kingdom of love. It is because God, for reasons which the Christian cannot fathom, chose him and raised him up and loosed him from sin and gave him a new heart and made him a son forever. It is all of grace.

For this destiny he is prepared. Holiness fits for heaven. What is holiness?

It is the life of God in the soul. It is Christ's righteousness clothing us

**Chosen ones  
made ready  
for heaven.**

like a robe. It is loving what God loves and doing His will. Without holiness no man Heb. 12:14. shall see the Lord. Heaven would not be congenial to an unholy spirit. Only character can see character. Only holiness can see the Holy one. Behold the limitations of heaven. Its blessedness can be enjoyed only by such as have been prepared for it. To them heaven is not a reward but a necessity. There must be a heaven, for those who have entered into holiness on earth must go on in eternal growth. And the joy of heaven consists not in being

there but in being like God. Therefore the important question is not, Can we get into heaven? as a vagrant on the street might covet a place in the supliced choir, being pleased by the dress and the music, but Am I prepared for heaven? am I growing in that grace whereby I may enjoy the bliss of heaven, if ever I reach that blessed place?

The true child of God can answer these questions in the affirmative. "God hath made us meet to be partakers of the saints in light." It is an accomplished fact. When the soul turns to Christ and is born anew it is prepared for heaven. The new affection changes the nature. God's work is instantaneous. "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise." At any moment the true believer is fit for his inheritance. The root of the matter is in him. He has life eternal. God may not call him home at once. Discipline and training may await him, to the end that an entrance may be ministered unto him abundantly. But all trial is the seal of his sonship and is designed only to prepare him for a brighter crown, a closer fellowship in the world to come.

Yet long in advance intimations of what

Colos. 1:12.

Lk. 23:43.

awaits are stirred within him. His earthly environment appears more and more inadequate. He notes the incongruity between his life in Christ and the spirit of the world in which he tarries. There is a painful discord between his inner feeling and the temper of the multitudes. His kingdom is not of this world. There is a positive antagonism between the place in which he has been put and the nature which has been given him. All about him are forces and factors of life which hinder spiritual progress and he asks in dismay, Is this vile world a friend to grace, to bring me near to God? Hungering and thirsting after righteousness he is mocked by the evil passions and the selfish wickedness of a world in which he must abide and with which he must deal. Let the world give him its best; he is unsatisfied. This is not true of any other creature than man. There is the finest adaptation, the world over, of bird, beast, fish, insect to their dwelling place. Man only is a stranger on earth. Foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests. The mere animal is at home in this material world. Here is its rest, its abiding place. Man has not where to lay his head. The more

Premoni-  
tions of  
coming  
glory.

he seeks to fulfil his destiny the less satisfaction can he find in things visible and temporal. "To Newton and to Newton's dog Diamond what a different universe." Longing for holiness the believer finds himself in a sphere in which holiness is reviled while sin is popular and pleasant. Is it strange if the chosen one looks for the city which hath foundations? "What kind of a world is this, the modern Abraham exclaims, "in which I am placed to attain goodness and which yet makes war upon goodness, a world teeming with evil ambitions, reeking with sensuality and unbelief, where the noblest aspirations are mocked, where all things habitually withstand my every effort to walk with God?" This incongruity between the world and his new nature fortifies in the believer's heart the hope of heaven. The contradictions of life confirm his confidence that at the end of this sojourn in tabernacles there is a city wherein the chosen family of God shall forever abide and attain their true destiny.

Is it said that the Christian is called to active service in the present world and not to dreamy and dissatisfied cravings for a change? But those who most ardently

*An incentive to diligence in well doing.*

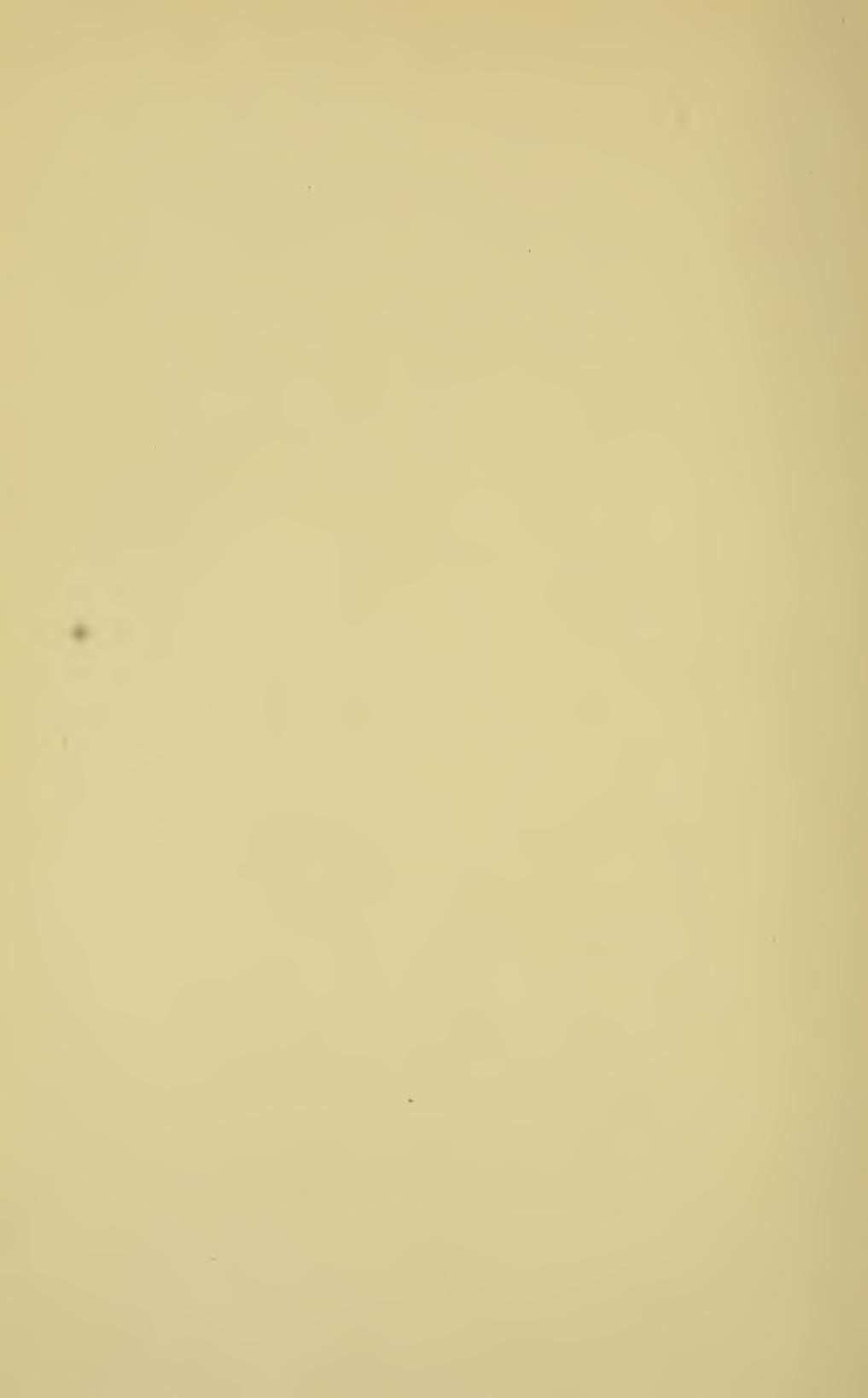
look for the heavenly rest are those who are most active in Christian service. They most fully realize the incompleteness and the insufficiency of this earthly existence. Abraham and Paul may be cited as two of the most active and faithful servants of God in the calendar of saints. They filled their earthly spheres full. They were not dreamy mystics but men of affairs, devoted to the duty of the hour, and most useful men in their day and generation. What was the issue? Abraham "looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." *Heb. 11:10.* Paul was "in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better." *Phil. 1:23.* The believers who live the ideal Christian life on earth are those who most eagerly look forward to the complete joys of heaven. This is inevitable. Worldliness makes the soul satisfied with present enjoyments. The careless Christian will not be pressed with unsatisfied longings. But the good soldier of Jesus Christ will feel a holy discontent resembling that which Christ felt when he prayed to be restored to the glory of the Father. We may look forward with great longings to the

spiritual life of heaven, when we shall be able to praise God worthily, when holiness will be perfected in our nature, when we shall see Christ and be like him and know as we are known.











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